

First Encounters With The Masters

With The Masters

FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MASTERS

AGATHIYAN PRODUCTION HOUSE

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Introduction

I have seen God! I have seen him face to face! I am seeing God just as clearly as you are seeing me. Those who have seen the truth can also show it to others. There is no room for doubt in these revelations.

– Ramana Maharshi

from 'SRI RAMANA DARSANAM' by Sadhu Natanananda.

God can be seen and spoken to just as surely as I am seeing you and speaking to you. If anyone really wants to see God and if he calls upon Him - God will reveal himself. That's for certain.

– Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

from 'RAMAKRISHNA - A PROPHET FOR THE NEW AGE' by Richard Schiffman.

It is possible to see Agathiyar and Ramalinga Adigal. But is that what you want?

– Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal's reply to the author's question and wish to see God and his Messengers.

Truman Caylor Wadlington in his book 'YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR - THE GODCHILD OF THIRUVANNAMALAI' writes,

Ramana Maharshi seldom wrote, but in his prose and verse he laid great emphasis upon the age old verity which asserts that the spiritual energy of a master transforms the consciousness of men. He claimed that nothing was equivalent to association with adepts as a means to attaining the supreme state.

Paul Zweig in the introduction to Swami Muktananda's 'THE PERFECT RELATIONSHIP', SYDA Foundation, 1985, writes,





After leaving home as a boy Swami Muktananda travelled all over India. He took the vows of a monk at the ashram of the great Siddharuda Swami. He felt that Gods 'secret' was not contained in any Sanskrit formula, ancient ritual, or technique of meditation; that severe austerities and physical deprivation would not reveal it. He felt that the 'secret' resided with great beings, with saints; they were themselves the 'secret' and he could learn what they were by loving them and sitting at their feet. After almost twenty five years he met Bhagawan Nithyananda

who became his guru. In a flash of self understanding he knew that he had found his other half; that now he was whole again.

Swami Muktananda in 'Kundalini - The Secret of Life', Siddha Yoga Publication, 1994, describes a true guru,

The guru is the grace bestowing power of God. The entire body of such a guru has become permeated with *Shakti*. In fact the guru becomes the embodiment of Shakti to such an extent that the hat he wears, his clothes, and the mat on which he sits become permeated with it, and just by touching them, a disciple can receive Shakti.

He goes on to describe the four ways in which the guru can transmit or deliberately awaken this Shakti in the disciple.

-  *Sparsha Diksha* or initiation through touch,
-  *Mantra Diksha* or initiation through word,
-  *Drik Diksha* or initiation through a look and
-  *Manasa Diksha* or initiation by thought.

Swami Muktananda adds that the greatest initiation is when there is an instantaneous experience of the supreme reality through either of the above mentioned ways and this is known as *Shambavi*.

Swami Muktananda in 'THE PERFECT RELATIONSHIP', SYDA Foundation, 1985, quotes from the 'GURU GITA' that sums it all up.

Dhyanamulam gurur murthi, the root of meditation is the guru's form,
The mind that contemplates the guru eventually becomes the guru.

Pujamulam guroho padam, the root of worship is the guru's feet,
Because the Kundalini Shakti flows continuously from the guru's feet, it is
beneficial to worship and touch them.

Mantramulam guror vakyam, the root of mantra is the guru's word,
His word is a mighty Mantra.

Mokshamulam guroho krupa, the root of liberation is the guru's grace.
The guru's compassionate glance is the means to liberation and supreme
peace. Without the grace of a guru, there is no knowledge and no state of
meditation.

Swami Muktananda explains,

If he tries to discover a path by himself, he will simply go around in circles, walking for a long time but never reaching his goal. The guru has found everything you are seeking; that which you want has become the guru's wealth. The difference between you and the guru is that you are the seed and the guru is the full-grown tree; you are the beginning, and he is the end.

Tirumular too expounds the greatness of the true guru in his 'TIRUMANTHIRAM',

தெளிவு குருவின் திருமேனி காண்டல்
தெளிவு குருவின் திருநாமஞ் செப்பல்
தெளிவு குருவின் திருவார்த்தை கேட்டல்
தெளிவு குருவுரு சிந்தித்தல் தானே

திருவடியே சிவமாவது தேரில்
திருவடியே சிவலோகஞ் சிந்திக்கில்
திருவடியே செல்கதியது செப்பில்
திருவடியே தஞ்சம் உள்தெளிவார்க்கே

குருவே சிவமெனக் கூறினன் நந்தி
குருவே சிவமென்பது குறித்தோரார்
குருவே சிவனுமாய்க் கோனுமாய் நிற்கும்
குருவே யுரை யுணர் வற்றதோர் கோவே

திருவடிஞானஞ் சிவமாக்குவிக்குந்
திருவடிஞானஞ் சிவலோகஞ் சேர்க்குந்
திருவடிஞானஞ் சிறைமலமீட்குந்
திருவடிஞானமே திண் சித்தி முத்தியே

சிவனை வழிபட்டார் எண்ணிலாத் தேவர்
அவனை வழிபட்டங்காமா றென்றில்லை
அவனை வழிபட்டங்காமாறு காட்டுங்
குருவை வழிபடிற் கூடலுமாமே

The first encounters of masters with their gurus had always amazed me. These precious moments where the guru identifies the disciple and the disciple makes the decision of accepting the teachings of the guru is always exciting to read again and again. Here in this book entitled 'FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MASTERS' I have compiled these sacred moments when the master meets the disciple and vice versa. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the publishers from whose works I have quoted and reproduced. It brings me great joy to start this journey with the story of Swami Sivananda who served in Malaya as a doctor prior to becoming a mendicant, and end it with me meeting my gurus Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal who was directed to preach the path of the Sidhas in Malaysia.

First Encounters with the Masters

Swami Sivananda And Paramahansa Viswananda Saraswati

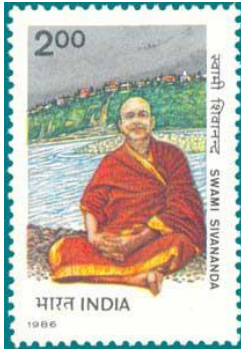


Photo 1 Stamp released on Swami Sivananda Birth Centenary 1986

Photo courtesy of www.indiapicks.com

Sivananda in his Autobiography, published by The Divine Life Society, 1995 writes about his journey seeking the truth. After serving in Malaya as a doctor Sivananda decided to quit his career and become a mendicant in 1923.

I led the life of a wandering monk, just for a short period, in search of my Guru and of a suitable place charged with spiritual vibrations, for spending my life in seclusion and to do rigorous Sadhana.

The life of a mendicant during pilgrimage helped me to develop in a great measure Titiksha (forbearance), equal vision and a balanced state of mind in pleasure and pain. I met many Mahatmas and learnt wonderful lessons. On some days I had to go without food and walk mile after mile. With a smile, I faced all hardships. A deep study of the ways of Mahatmas opened my eyes and gave me strength to stick to rigorous Sadhana in the right direction. I felt the Grace of the Lord. I derived strength and guidance from within. I found ways for an all-round development. I had the goal of my life as Self-realisation and determined to spend every bit of my energy and time in study, service and Sadhana.

In search of a Guru, I reached Rishikesh and prayed to the Lord for His Grace. I came to Rishikesh in June 1924 and found it my destination. I found Rishikesh an ideal place for intense and undisturbed spiritual practices true for all seekers after Truth. From the sacred hands of Paramahansa Viswananda Saraswati, I received Holy initiation on the bank of the Ganga on 1st June, 1924. My Guru gave me initiation and enough spiritual strength and blessings.

Gurus can do this much only. It is the student who has to do intense and rigorous Sadhana. Guru's Grace is needed by the disciple. This does not mean that the disciple should sit idle and expect a miracle from the Guru to push him directly into Samadhi. The Guru cannot do Sadhana for the student. It is foolish to expect

spiritual attainments from a drop of Kamandalu water from the Guru. The Guru can guide the student, clear his doubts, pave the way, remove the snares, pitfalls and obstacles and throw light on the path. But it is the disciple himself who has to walk every step in the spiritual path.

There is no other way of overcoming the vicious worldly Samskaras of the passionate nature of raw, worldly-minded persons than personal contact with and service to the Guru.

A personal Guru is necessary in the beginning. He alone can show you the path to attain God, who is the Guru of Gurus, and obviate the snares and pitfalls on your path.

Self-realisation is a transcendental experience. You can march in the spiritual path only by placing implicit faith in the words of sages who have realised the Truth (Apta Vakya) and attained knowledge of the Self.

Spiritual progress requires intense and unswerving faith in the teachings of the Guru and the Sastras, burning and lasting Vairagya, yearning for liberation, adamant will, fiery resolve, iron determination, unruffled patience, leech-like tenacity, clock-like regularity, child-like simplicity. If you have no Guru, take Lord Krishna or Siva or Rama or Christ as your Guru. Pray to Him. Meditate on Him. Sing His Name. He will send you a suitable Guru.

The religious rite of Viraja Homa was done for me by my Acharya Guru, Sri Swami Vishnudevanandaji Maharaj at Kailas Ashram.



Swami Vishnudevananda And Swami Sivananda

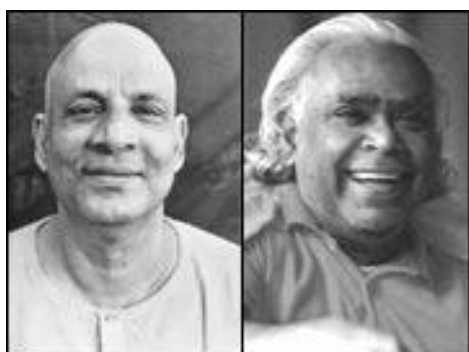


Photo 2 Swami Vishnudevananda and Swami Sivananda
Photo courtesy of <http://www.maasyoga.nl>

After reading the personal account of Swami Vishnudevananda in 'My Years with the Master' at <http://www.sivanandaonline.org>, I was proud to be in a land where Swami Sivananda had once served as a doctor.

Swami Vishnudevananda writes,

As if by chance, I had found a piece of paper that intrigued me. One night when I was working late and was searching for a misplaced paper, I found a small pamphlet in the trash basket. It was called "Sadhana Tattva" and was by Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. As soon as I read it, my body began to shake. It began with "An ounce of practice is worth tons of theory." Here was a teacher who was down-to-earth and practical. There was nothing mysterious about his teachings; I felt that I had to meet him for myself. I got a few days leave from the army.

I was an arrogant boy on leave from the army. It meant that I had to travel a day and a night from my army base in Jullunder. I would have only a few hours at the Ashram-just to see the Master and then go right back.

The first time I saw Swami Sivananda he was sitting with about 30 or 40 people around him. He looked like an ordinary man among them. The look on his face and manner of speech were simple and straightforward. Each word came from his heart. There was no kind of religious hypocrisy, no sitting on a tiger skin with ashes smeared all over his body. He had an extraordinary spiritual glow.

The second time, I saw him Swami Sivananda was coming up the stairs in my direction. I didn't want to bow my head to him. I was young and arrogant and never wanted to bow my head to anybody-Swami, God-realised soul or whoever, I didn't care. But it is the tradition in India that you should bow your head to a holy man. To avoid the situation I just moved out of his path.

The Master saw me and headed in my direction. He asked me who I was and where I was coming from. Then he bowed down and touched my feet!!

My whole body began to shake violently. With all my heart, with all my life and love, I learned to bow without any type of reservation. He touched my heart not with miracles or shows of holiness, but with his perfect egoless nature.

He didn't consider that I was just a stupid boy standing there, though I was just that. He touched my heart and broke the ego. That was my first lesson, and if I could attain one millionth of the state of egolessness of the Master, it is His Grace.

Before leaving, I went down the Ganga where it was the custom of the Ashram to do Aarati (waving of lights) every evening. All the devotees and inmates of the Ashram assembled by the banks of the Ganga to watch Master perform this evening worship. I was sceptical. I was of a scientific temperament and knew that a river is only water, H2O-imagine worshipping H2O!!

But as I stood there and watched Master waving the lights, I saw the river become a mass of flowing lights. At that instant the river assumed a divine flow, a manifestation of the Grace of the Lord. Master turned and looked at me and in my

mind I heard his message, "God pervades everything; this too is His Special Form."
This entirely changed my outlook on life.

Swami Muktananda And Bhagawan Nithyananda

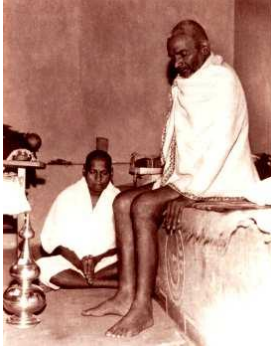


Photo 3 Muktananda with his guru Bhagawan Nithyananda
Photo courtesy of www.cosmicharmony.com

Muktananda in 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING? A GUIDE TO THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY', SYDA Foundation, 1989, talks about the first moments he met his guru.

The moment I saw him I knew that he was a great sage. He came to my school. Although I met him when I was fifteen years old he did not give me Shaktipat until much later. A guru waits until the disciple can handle the Shakti. So Bhagawan Nithyananda waited until I was completely ready. From the first time I met him I had great love for him. Even when I was wandering I would occasionally go and see him.

In 'A PERFECT LIFE', Siddha Yoga Publication, 1996, Margaret Simpson, mentions that Bhagawan Nithyananda used to pass through Muktananda's village from time to time, once appeared in the school playground and stroked the cheeks of Muktananda although only for a brief moment but that meeting left Muktananda profoundly changed.

Now when he sat at his school desk thoughts of Bhagawan Nithyananda filled his mind. As the days passed his longing to know God became like a fire inside him.

After many years of travel and meeting numerous sadhus, and having visited Bhagawan Nithyananda on his pilgrimages Muktananda made his way to Ganeshpuri again. As he bowed his head to Bhagawan Nithyananda, Nithyananda who was lying on his side opened his eyes and said,



Photo 4 Bhagawan Nithyananda. Photo Courtesy of 'The Chidakasha Gita of Bhagawan Nithyananda of Ganeshpuri'

“So you have come”.

One evening he said to Muktananda,

“Meditation on the guru gives you life. All knowledge is in meditation on the guru.”

These words were like a mantra to Baba.

On night he stayed in the meditation hall at Bhagawan house meditating on Nithyananda all night long. That night he started to feel as if Muktananda no longer existed. He had become Nithyananda and he felt blissfully happy. The next morning at Darshan, Bhagawan acknowledged that what Muktananda went through was real meditation.

Swami Muktananda in his book ‘SECRET OF THE SIDDHAS’, Siddha Yoga Publication, 1980, mentions that his master gave him one word that completely transformed him. And he also mentions he had to spend such a long time with Bhagawan Nithyananda to receive it.

Bhagawan Nithyananda who always travelled barefoot, once wore sandals. “Take these sandals, put them on,” he instructed Muktananda. Muktananda questioned his guru, “Gurudev you have worn these Padukas. How can I wear them?”. But he did accept them though. Then at that very moment he saw a ray of light coming from Bhagawan Nithyananda’s eyes and it went straight into him. He could feel it too.

Margaret Simpson writes,

It was searing red hot and so bright that it dazzled his eyes. Every hair on Baba’s (Muktananda) body rose in awe. He kept repeating, “Guru Om, Guru Om,”

He lost all sense of himself. He only came out of it when Nithyananda made a sound.

As he set off for home that day carrying Bhagawan’s sandals on his head Muktananda was filled with wonder and gratitude.

Muktananda says,

That word (Guru Om), which I receive after so many years, spread through my body from head to toe like wildfire carried by the wind. It produced in me both inner heat and the coolness of joy.

Before meeting my guru I had practised many different kinds of yoga, but it was I who had practised them. However, that word activated a spontaneous yoga within me. I was filled with amazement.

He says everything - postures, Mudras and breathing processes - all these happened on its own. He became ecstatic.

After the awakening of the Shakti, this process of yogic movements began to take place within my entire body. The pulsation of his ecstasy pervades my entire body like the movement of the wind. The Kriyas were his, the yoga was his, and meditation took place because of him. The final message that I received was from him. The power of his word permeates each of my blood cells; the fluids of my entire body are his. That is why I am joyful. Gurudev entered me and replaced all my bodily fluids with his. He evicted me and took up residence in me. He annihilated my ego. By making my individuality his, he became me. This is the guru's compassion. Only when I lost myself in the ecstasy of Bhagawan Nithyananda did I realize who he was.

Swami Muktananda says his joy arises from the one word - Guru Om; from the churning of the love between the guru and the disciple. He adds,

Only the guru can know that delight and taste the elixir that arises in every pore of the body.

Ramalinga Adigal says only God knows what he received in a stanza from the ARUTPA, Anni Ponnambalathe. Ramalinga Adigal describes in detail the passage and journey till he comes face to face with the Lord.

ஆணிப்பொன்னம்பலத்தே கண்ட காட்சிகள்
அற்புதக் காட்சியடி அம்மா
அற்புதக் காட்சியடி..

..மற்றவர் நின்று வழிகாட்ட மேலோர்
மணிவாயில் உற்றேனடி அம்மா
மணிவாயில் உற்றேனடி

என்னும் அவ் வாயிலில் பெண்ணோடாணாக
இருவர் இருந்தாரடி அம்மா
இருவர் இருந்தாரடி

அங்கவர் காட்ட அணுக்கத் திருவாயில்
அன்பொடு கண்டேனடி அம்மா
அன்பொடு கண்டேனடி

அத்திரு வாயிலில் ஆனந்த வல்லி என்
அம்மை இருந்தாளடி அம்மா
அம்மை இருந்தாளடி

அம்மையைக் கண்டேன் அவளருள் கொண்டேன்
அமுதமும் உண்டேனடி அம்மா
அமுதமும் உண்டேனடி

தாங்கும் அவளருளாலே நடராஜர்
சந்நிதி கண்டேனடி அம்மா
சந்நிதி கண்டேனடி

சந்நிதியில் சென்று நான் பெற்ற பேறது
சாமி அறிவாரடி அம்மா
சாமி அறிவாரடி

Dhaya Mesrobian provides a translation to this stanza (Source: www.dhaya.net),

*Oh nursing Mother my mighty mother so been wonder you have giving me the vision of
The golden sphere so pure with shining gold it seems that the divine visions are so rare
and wonderful.*

*... .. Oh Mother I reached the jewelled doorway!
Contemplating the doorway I saw the Divine Father, Mother of God.
They where there, helping me to go.
Oh Mother two of them!
I drew near the holy entrance and there they revealed:
We are the supreme Mother, Father nearest to God.
Oh Mother I look out with love!
First I met my dear Mother.
She is the Heaven gate!
Oh Mother My Mother!
I looked upon her, received her Grace and Divine ambrosia.
Oh Mother I dined on ambrosia.
Then only with the Grace of the Divine Mother I could see the vision of the supreme
Dancing King inside my soul.
Oh Mother I saw the sanctum!
At this moment only God was advising me in my soul with His dancing Grace.
Only He knows what he gave me by his Grace.
Oh Mother only God knows!*





Swami Rajarshi Muni in 'YOGA - THE ULTIMATE ATTAINMENT', Jaico Publishing House, 2004 states that one should only follow the wilful method until one finds the real guru. He says one should cultivate through yogic practises the intensifying of the vital force Prana.

Prana initially known as Pranaprabalya, once intensified through yogic means, releases a force known as Pranasfurana where various physical movements occur spontaneously. The vital force, now known as Pranotthana, needs to be raised along the Sushumna. Then stabilization or Pranastambhana and conquering or Pranajaya of the prana in the frontal region follows and finally annihilation or Prananirodha or dissolution or Pranalaya takes place.

Swami Rajarshi Muni adds,

With the release of the vital force, a continuous process of meditation starts, leading ultimately to the real awareness of the self through the gradual transformation of an aspirant's consciousness. From that time on one should surrender to the released prana that knows well how to lead an aspirant forward on the path of self realization. Therefore aspirants should submit themselves fully to the released vital force that shapes their spiritual destiny.

For spontaneous yoga to take place the Swami mentions that one needs,

-  The grace of God or *Ishvar Kripa*;
-  The grace of a true guru or *Guru Kripa*;
-  The grace of understanding the scriptures or *Shastra Kripa*; and
-  The grace of one's self or *Atma Kripa*.

Without these four graces the final goal cannot be reached says Swami Rajarshi Muni.



Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

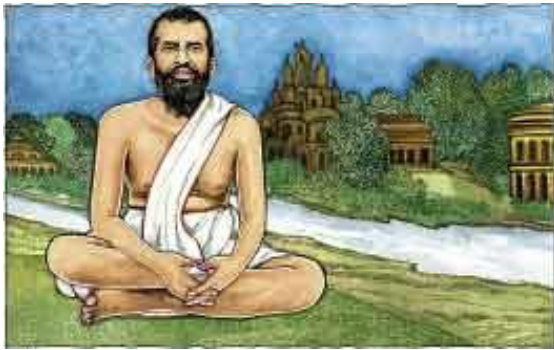


Photo 5 Ramakrishna and Vivekananda

Ramakrishna Photo courtesy of www.himalayanacademy.com, Vivekananda Photo courtesy of www.rkmvu.ac.in

Richard Schiffman in 'SRI RAMAKRISHNA – A PROPHET FOR THE NEW AGE', Paragon House, 1989 mentions that Ramakrishna had had a vision of Naren (later came to be known as Swami Vivekananda -Ed) even before they met. He relates his vision,

Ramakrishna suddenly found himself soaring on a luminous pathway through progressively more subtle worlds. From the everyday plane of matter, he ascended to the realm of pure thought, and from there to the divine heaven of the Gods and Goddesses. Finally, he pierced the luminous barrier between the world of relativity and the shore of the absolute. In this world beyond the worlds, which even the Gods could not hope to penetrate, seven venerable sages were seated rapt in the silent contemplation of the eternal.

Ramakrishna gazed in awe at the radiant sages whose bodies were composed of the light of pure consciousness. As he looked on, a portion of the surrounding luminosity became detached and resolved itself into the figure of a divine child. The child ambled over to one of the seers and clasped him affectionately in his soft arms, rousing him from super consciousness. As the sage returned to outward awareness the expression of pure delight in his eyes showed that the child was the beloved of his heart and infinitely dear to him. "I am going down. You must come too," the child insisted. And the sage expressed his mute agreement with a tender look of assent. Finally the yogi returned to Samadhi and as he did so a fragment of his body and mind broke loose descending to earth in a ball of radiance.

Ramakrishna on meeting Naren immediately recognised him as that sage. The divine child was Ramakrishna.

Richard Schiffman shares Naren's own account of his first meeting with the master. Ramakrishna took Naren away from the room where several other devotees were gathered, to the northern veranda.

To my great surprise, he (Ramakrishna) began to weep with joy. He held me by the hand and addressed me very tenderly, as if I was long familiar to him. He said, "You've come so late! Was that right? Couldn't you have guessed how I've been waiting for you? My ears are nearly burnt off listening to the talk of these worldly people. I thought I would burst not having anyone to tell how I really felt!" He went on like that-raving and weeping. And then suddenly he folded his palms together and began addressing me as if I was some divine being, "I know who you are my Lord. You are Nara, the ancient sage, the incarnation of Lord Narayana. You have come back to earth to take away the sufferings and sorrows of mankind.".... I didn't answer him and let this wonderful madman go on talking as he chose. Then he took my hand and said, "Promise me you'll come back here soon, alone." I couldn't refuse his request; it was made so earnestly. so I had to say, "I will."

Richard Schiffman writes further,

Seemingly against his own better judgement Naren was powerfully moved by Ramakrishna. Naren could neither forget the strange priests nor comprehend him.

Naren who prided himself on the ability to judge a man and gauge his worth on sight now could not do so as Ramakrishna eluded judgement says Richard Schiffman.

Now feeling challenged Naren had no choice but to return to Ramakrishna. The second meeting with Ramakrishna would be even much more unsettling, and much more deeply challenging to everything Naren thought himself to be.

Ramakrishna muttered something to himself as he approached Naren on his second visit.

"I thought we were about to have another crazy scene. Scarcely had that thought passed through my mind than he placed his right foot on my body. Immediately I had a wonderful experience. My eyes were wide open and I saw that everything in the room including the walls themselves was whirling rapidly around and receding and at the same time it seemed to me that my consciousness of self together with the entire universe was about to vanish into a vast all devouring void. I felt that death was right before me very close. Unable to control myself I cried out loudly, "Ah, what are you doing to me? Don't you know I have parents at home?" When the master heard this he gave out a loud laugh. Then touching my chest with his hand, he said, "All right - let it stop now. It needn't be done all at once. It will

happen in its own good time.” To my amazement this extraordinary vision of mine vanished as suddenly as it had come.”

Richard Schiffman says Naren struggled as he had after his first bizarre meeting with Ramakrishna to wrest some sense out of this latest episode – but with no greater success. On his third visit it did happen again.

When Ramakrishna touched him lightly Naren immediately lost consciousness. Even afterward he had no recollection of what had taken place during the trance.

The answer to as what took place during that time is answered by Ramakrishna.

Speaking about this incident later with his devotees, Ramakrishna revealed that Naren had become temporarily unconscious of his present identity, but cognizant of the larger context of his spiritual destiny. In that state the master questioned him minutely about his past lives and the nature of his present mission and future fate. The master did not reveal any of this to Naren when he recovered his outward consciousness.

Although Ramakrishna treated Naren with special regard, Naren didn't for a moment understand it or feel worthy of it says Richard Schiffman.

More than a few questioned what the master saw in him for Naren was too wilful and supremely self confident for the tastes of some says Richard Schiffman.

Naren appeared argumentative. He didn't show any of the usual deference to the views of elders and went so far as to dispute openly with the master. He condemned Ramakrishna's views on image worship. He didn't even stop short of abusing Kali whose worship he did not support.

Richard Schiffman writes, these views did not appear to bother Naren much less did it trouble his master since Ramakrishna had prayed that Mother should send him someone who will dispute his very realizations. And Ramakrishna's prayer was answered.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Totapuri

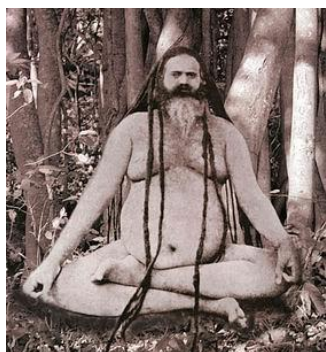


Photo 6 Totapuri

Photo courtesy of www.gurusfeet.com

Now moving on to Totapuri, Ramakrishna's master, Richard Schiffman writes,

Unlike Ramakrishna who had been granted a vision by the gods and had recognized Naren on meeting him the first time, Totapuri did not recognize Ramakrishna when he first caught sight of him amidst a gathering of pilgrims by the Ganges. Totapuri had not received the divine edict to search out Ramakrishna and to instruct him.

Richard Schiffman continues to write,

But the very moment his hawk's eyes alighted on the huddled figure of Ramakrishna rapt with inward joy on the ghat steps, Totapuri's mind froze in its tracks, stunned. Quite against the aloof habits of his sadhu's life he felt compelled to make an unusual offer.

Totapuri strode to Ramakrishna and addressed him,

"My son I see that you have already travelled far along the way to truth. If you wish it I can help you reach the next stage. I will teach you Vedanta."

The prospect of fresh spiritual instruction thrilled Ramakrishna as always with a joyous expectancy.

Ramakrishna responded immediately, "I will have to get my mother's permission first" replied Ramakrishna and off he went to the temple of Kali. He was back in a jiffy and conveyed his mother's consent to Totapuri.

The divine mother had given her assent revealing that it was for the purpose of his instruction in non-dualism that she had brought Totapuri to Dakshineswar. From that moment onward Ramakrishna gave himself unreservedly to the holy man's care.

Ramakrishna struggled mightily, Richard Schiffman writes, to follow Totapuri's instruction on meditation.

It was no use; the last and most subtle barrier, the golden chain of his devotion, barred the path. The personal God who had lighted his way and guided his steps now stood as a barrier to the realization of the impersonal reality.

Richard Schiffman conveys Ramakrishna's own electrifying description,

I tried on several occasions to concentrate my mind on the truth of Advaita Vedanta; but each time the form of the Mother intervened. I said to Totapuri in despair, "It's no good. I will never be able to lift my spirit to the unconditioned state and find myself face to face with the atman!"

He replied severely, "What do you mean you can't? You must!"

Looking about him he found a shard of glass. He took it and struck the point between my eyes, saying, "Concentrate your mind on that point." Then I began to meditate with all my might, and soon the gracious form of the Divine Mother appeared. I used my discrimination as a sword and cloved her in two. The last barrier vanished and my spirit immediately precipitated itself beyond the plane of the conditioned. I lost myself in Samadhi.

Sri Ramana Maharshi And Arunachala



Photo 7 Stamp of Ramana released in 1971

Photo courtesy of www.indiapicks.com

B.V.Narasimha Swami in 'SELF REALIZATION - THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI' describes vividly the moment, after Ramana's arrival in Tiruvannamalai on the morning of 1st September 1896.

With quick steps and a bounding heart Ramana proceeded straight to the great temple of Arunachaleswara. The gates of the three high compound walls and all

the inner doors were open. There was not a soul beside him there; and it looked as though the father was thus preparing to welcome his beloved son who marched straight to the innermost shrine without any hindrance. He stood awhile there in ecstasy and then left the sanctuary. Three years passed before he again went in to see Arunachala in that temple. Constant visits to the shrine he felt were needless in the face of the constant presence that filled his heart of the hourly protection that he received and of the strengthening realization that he was the immortal spirit.

There are numerous accounts of first hand experiences that devotees had when they stood before Ramana.



Sivaprakasam Pillai And Sri Ramana Maharshi



Photo 8 Sivaprakasam Pillai
Photo courtesy of www.sriramanamaharshi.org

When Sivaprakasam Pillai had to decide whether to remarry or live the life of an ascetic he approached Ramana at the Virupaksha cave and waited for days for a sign. Finally when he thought of leaving for his village he witnesses something remarkable - a dazzling aura was surrounding Ramana. A golden child gradually emerged and before long re-entered it. Sivaprakasam wept in ecstasy. Next evening as he sat before Ramana he witnesses again another phenomenon. This time a halo of light surrounded Ramana and he appeared smeared in sacred ash. Two days later as he sat before Ramana, the master appeared to Sivaprakasam Pillai as a mass of crystal. Pillai's heart overflowed with joy. He was convinced that he had received the grace of Ramana and decided to lead a similar life of Tapas henceforth.



Ganapathi Sastri And Sri Ramana Maharshi



Photo 9 Ganapathi Sastri with Ramana

Photo courtesy of <http://arunachalamaharshi.blogspot.com>

Ganapathi Sastri visited Ramana twice in 1903 and returned to his daily life thereafter. But on his next visit to Ramana in 1907, he quivered with emotion as he walked up to Ramana who was residing at the Virupaksha cave. Sastri fell at Ramana's feet and grasped them and implored of him to explain what Tapas meant. After fifteen minutes Ramana broke the silence by explaining the nature of tapas.

“If one watches whence this notion of ‘I’ springs the mind will be absorbed into that. That is tapas.”

“If a Mantra is repeated and attention directed to the source whence the mantra sound is produced the mind will be absorbed in that. That is tapas.”

This instruction filled Sastri with joy. His quest had been fruitful; his question answered. The learned Pandit Sastri stayed behind to compose various stanzas, poems and verses on Ramana and humbly requested all present to address the master, Venkatarama Aiyar (Ramana's original name) as Ramana henceforth. Sastri left Tiruvannamalai in 1908 but visited Ramana in the subsequent years.



Ragavachariar And Sri Ramana Maharshi

Ragavachariar on one of his many visits to Ramana silently asked that Ramana reveal his true form. Ramana then was seated on the porch with a picture of Dhakshanamurthy on the wall next to him. Ragavachariar narrates.

He silently gazed on as usual and I gazed into his eyes. Then his body and also the picture of Dhakshanamurthy disappeared from my view. There was only empty space without even a wall before my eyes. Then followed a whitish cloud in the outline of the Maharshi, and Dhakshanamurthy formed before my eyes. Gradually

the outline of these figures appeared. Then other details were outlined in lightning like lines. These gradually broadened till the whole figure of the Maharshi and Dhakshanamurthy became ablaze with very strong and unendurable light.

Later when he mentioned what he had seen to Ramana, Ramana answered,

“You wanted to see my form. You saw my disappearance. I am formless. Ganapathi Sastri had a similar experience and you may consult him.”

Suddhananda Bharati And Sri Ramana Maharshi

To Suddhananda Bharati, Ramana first appeared as a heap of sacred ashes, then as a pillar of fire and next as Sivalingam. He wrote a brilliant piece of poetic prose ‘Ramana Vijayam’, every line of which breathes fervid devotion to Maharishi says B.V.Narasimha Swami.

Yogi Ramiah And Sri Ramana Maharshi

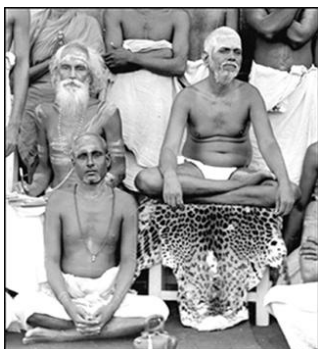


Photo 10 Yogi Ramiah (sitting on the ground) with Ramana, B. V. Narasimha Swami with pencil and paper.
Photo courtesy of <http://forum.yogananda.net>

When Yogi Ramiah left his riches for a life of an ascetic, his guru sent him back to his village with the instruction, “Go and do your Tapas in the seclusion of your garden and I shall come later on and see how you progress.” Ramiah returned home to continue with his Tapas. Intense devotion through his Japa on Sri Rama carried him through to illumination in Samadhi. Through concentration of the mind, assisted by the fixed gaze on the tip of the nose at first and on the space between the eyebrows later, he experienced the vision of Sri Rama. As he continued his concentration all these disappeared and there was only a feeling of something bright. The question that aroused in Ramiah was, “Could the subject and object be after all identical”. He asked local Pandits about it. Their replies did not satisfy him. He came to Ramana and posed the question. Ramana answered, “The subject and object are distinct in the phenomenal world to the ordinary man. But in Samadhi they merged and became one”.



Natesa Mudaliar And Sri Ramana Maharshi

Natesa Mudaliar after seeing Ramana and having been to various reputed ascetics finally sat in silence at Skandasram again with the thought a Satguru must be found. But sadly he left Skandasram without a positive answer. Thereafter he sent letters to Ramana adamant on getting Upadesa from Ramana.

In the next letter, with frustration he requested Ramana not to be selfish and indifferent to true seekers and longing souls and mentioned that his previous visit was fruitless. He wrote, "Whatever the number of re-births I have to endure still I am resolved to get my Upadesa from you and you alone. So for this purpose you must be reborn if you give me up in this birth as unprepared or too immature to receive your instruction. I swear to this."

Thereafter Ramana appeared in his dream with a message, "Do not constantly think of me; you must first secure the favour of Maheswara. Meditate on him and secure his grace first. My help will follow as a matter of course."

When finally Natesa Mudaliar stood in front of Ramana again, Ramana answers, "I am always giving my Anugraham. If you cannot apprehend it what am I to do?"

Ramana's grace was showered on Natesa by means of dreams. In 1926 Natesa put forth his desire to become an ascetic to Ramana. Ramana discouraged him pointing out that if one left home to escape a single hindrance ten hindrances will come his way to test his mettle. "Go home and try to be equally unconcerned and unaffected in the midst of home life."

Natesa went on to write poems on Ramana.

Yogi Ramsuratkumar And Sri Ramana Maharshi



Photo 11 Yogi Ramsuratkumar

Photo courtesy of <http://www.lifepositive.com>

Although having spent much time on the shores of the Ganges with holy men and sadhus Ramsuratkumar, could not find the answers he sought. He cried aloud in agony, “Years of this short life have passed and still I do not stand at your side. Why can’t I see you?”

In 1947 with a burning desire to realize his innate divinity he set off in search of a master. The search for his spiritual father brought Ramsuratkumar first to Sri Aurobindo and later to Ramana. After spending three days with Ramana he moved on to Swami Ramdas. The yogi could not accept Ramdas’s life of luxury. He returned to his home in Kashi.

The next year he came back south to Aurobindo’s ashram but could not stay there. He went to Tiruvannamalai and stayed for about two months with the Ramana. Ramsuratkumar sat in the presence of Ramana as did the others.

Truman Caylor Wadlington in his book ‘YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR - THE GODCHILD OF THIRUVANNAMALAI’ writes,

Meeting the Maharshi’s (Ramana) gaze he went into a visual rapport with him and completely lost himself in the timeless wonder of that Godly soul. He felt as though he existed during that short while not as his solitary physical body but something far greater, far more glorious and vast. His innermost being underwent a spiritual transfiguration.

Yogi Ramsuratkumar And Swami Ramdas



Photo 12 Ramdas

Photo courtesy of www.urbanhindu.com

Truman Caylor Wadlington in his book 'YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR - THE GODCHILD OF THIRUVANNAMALAI' writes,

However, unlike his meetings with Ramana and Aurobindo he felt no attraction to Ramdas.

Ramsuratkumar could not bring himself to accept Ramdas's life of luxury. He returned to his home in Kashi.

Ramsuratkumar visited Ramdas again and again but he felt the same way towards Ramdas each time he was with Ramdas. Ramsuratkumar then returned to his home.

When Ramana followed by Aurobindo, passed away, Ramsuratkumar thought that he should open himself to the remaining sole saviour Ramdas. In 1952 he arrived again at Ramdas's ashrams; only this time Ramdas turned out to be an entirely different person.

Truman writes,

It is interesting to note that when he arrived the third time the holy man was actually awaiting his arrival in expectation and greeted him just as a father would have received his own son.

In 'WAVES OF LOVE' published by Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan Mauritius, 2009,

It was the third chance to visit Ramdas. The two great Masters (Ramana and Sri Aurobindo) had passed away. This beggar thought to himself, "Let me try again to visit Ramdas, for he is recognized as a great sage. So in 1952 this beggar did not go to Tiruvannamalai, nor did he go to Pondicherry, for the Masters were not there. But this time Swami Ramdas turned out to be an extremely different person. At the

very first sight, Ramdas could tell a number of intimate things about the life and mission of this beggar which nobody but this beggar knew.

Truman quotes the yogi,

“At the very first sight Ramdas could tell a number of intimate things about the life and mission of this beggar which nobody but this beggar knew.”

Ramsuratkumar had at last found his master. He came to recognize Ramdas as a truly great sage now.

Truman writes on Ramdas,

The master knew the truth and the way and knew as well that there was nothing he could say to provide a short cut for the disciple.

By the law of occult causation all progress on the path must be won by the individual through personal effort. Thus one who knows the way cannot speak, understanding that the path is constructed by the aspirant much like the spider spins its web out of its own being. All that is left for the disciple is to become his own guide and to find his own way home.

Truman quotes the yogi on his three masters who worked on him.

“This beggar had three fathers. There was much work done on this beggar. Aurobindo started, Ramana did a little and Ramdas finished.”

Ma Devaki writes in ‘YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR -THE DIVINE BEGGAR’, published by Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram, Tiruvannamalai July 2008.

‘According to Sri Yogiji, the four years of tutelage under Sri Aurobindo and Maharishi Ramana were a period of ceaseless transformation of the human into the divine - a period of construction of all that was conducive, destruction of all that was dross and sublimation of all into greater and greater awakening. His days see-sawed between heights of ecstasy and depths of gloom.’

When finally the Yogi came to Ramdas,

He was already a ripe fruit needing but a gentle tap from the sage of Kerala for final consummation with God. Now a divine madness, bordering sometimes on the vestiges of insanity, gripped him uncontrollably. Yogi Ramsuratkumar laughed and wept, sang and danced and yet other times sat still as a stone or rolled on the ground, ecstatically overwhelmed by beatific surges of divine consciousness.

For many years Ramdas had secretly worked on the disciple to accustom his body gradually to higher rates of vibration. Then Ramdas initiated him into the repetition of the Ram Mantra. What was to transpire then and there, was a vivification of the centres or Chakras of the inner man, a radical elimination of all impurities and a sudden influx of energy directed through the master and accompanied by a release of latent spiritual fire within the disciple. The initiation would throw him into the cosmic dimensions of the divine mind and open doors to fields of activity and realms of consciousness hitherto unknown to him.

When the initiation was complete Swami Ramdas remained silent for a moment and then said, "Go and repeat this mantra day and night all the twenty four hours."

In 'WAVES OF LOVE' published by Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan Mauritius, 2009,

Swami (Ramdas) has killed this beggar, but life has come. Millions and millions of salutations at the lotus feet of my Master, Swami Ramdas! He has initiated this beggar in Ram Nam and has asked to chant it all the twenty four hours. This beggar began to do it and in the space of a week, this beggar has got this madness. The same madness still continues.

Truman writes on the yogi and his master,

No sooner was Ramsuratkumar initiated than the mantra became a vehicle for the energies of certain supra physical states in which he the mystic singer was introduced to higher levels of consciousness. The syllables of the mantra were representative of primordial sounds forces of polarized energy which harmonized his being with divine nature. From the moment of his initiation there followed a long series of awakenings, exaltations and glimpses of reality. Waves of rapturous love for God swept over him, raised him up to regions of pure ecstasy and left him without a trace of outward consciousness centred in the Godly realms of the infinite.

In the master's words,

The power of the divine name is invincible. It can convert pain into joy. It can change death into immortality. Nay it can transform our entire life into the very being and consciousness of all pervading and all inclusive godhead.

In the course of only seven days and seven nights the yogi made the great exodus from the kingdom of man to the kingdom of God. The latent forces released within him combined with the power of the master whipped him out of bondage

into limitless freedom and from the mists of human intelligence into the luminous consciousness of the divine mind.

In 'WAVES OF LOVE' published by Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan Mauritius, 2009,

Swami Ramdas brought him to understand that his own nature and that of his spiritual mission required him to enter into the tumult of the world. He saw that his greatest potential as a beneficent force in nature lay not in divorcing himself from the world he sought to aid but in integrating himself with it. And he knew that it was for him to walk amidst the people and secretly to unveil their souls and unlock their hearts and free them from the prison house of matter.

Ramsuratkumar left the home of his master for Tiruvannamalai but only arrived at Tiruvannamalai after seven long years having wandered the length and breadth of India.

Swami Ramdas And Sri Ramana Maharshi

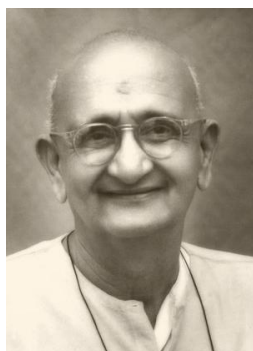


Photo 13 Swami Ramdas

Photo courtesy of <http://sudheeptnair.blogspot.com>

Swami Ramdas had been with Ramana Maharshi as quoted in the book 'FRAGRANT PETALS' published by Sri Ramanasramam, 2005.

In his early autobiography 'IN QUEST OF GOD' published by Anandaashram, Ramdas describes how he attained the divine vision through the grace of the Maharshi.

Ramdas addressed Ramana on his first visit to the Maharshi,

“Maharaj here stands before thee a humble slave. Have pity on him. His only prayer to thee is to give him thy blessing.”

Ramana turned to look at Ramdas and nodded his head.

A thrill of inexpressible joy coursed through Ramdas, his whole body quivering like a leaf in the breeze.

Ramdas dived into deep meditation in a cave atop the mountain Arunachala. He held undisturbed communion with Lord Rama.

Ramdas narrates how he felt while in communion with the Lord to Dilip Kumar Roy.

“Did you see him with closed eyes or open?” asked Dilip.

“With open eyes as Ramdas is seeing you,” came the reply.

But it was not this momentary vision that Ramdas’s heart craved for. For he knew that a vision like this was unlikely to last.... therefore he prayed for the great Darshan, the vision of visions which comes to stay forever; so that there is no more parting - Vishvarupa Darshan - seeing Rama always in everything; nothing less would satisfy Ramdas.

“And it came one morning,” added Ramdas, “when lo the entire landscape changed. All was Rama, nothing but Rama wherever Ramdas looked!”

Everything was Rama - vivid marvellous rapturous - the trees, the shrubs, the ants, the cows, the cats, the dogs, even inanimate things pulsated with the marvellous presence of the one Rama. And Ramdas danced in joy.....

Ramdas rushed at a tree which he embraced - calling out “Rama Rama!” he ran towards a passerby and embraced him - calling out “Rama Rama!” which scared the lights out of him and he took flight.

The bliss and joy came to be permanent, told Ramdas to Dilip.

“This experience is called Sahaja Samadhi in which you can never be cut off from the consciousness of being at one with the one who has become all; in which you feel you are one with all”

Swami Ramdas in ‘VISION’, the monthly journal of Anandashram comments further about his state,

“Ramdas went to Ramana in a state of complete obliviousness of the world. He felt thrills of ecstasy in his presence. The Maharshi made the awakening permanent in Ramdas.”



Swami Gnanananda Giri and Swami Sivaratna Giri



Photo 14 Swami Gnanananda Giri

Photo courtesy of <http://srignananandansmm.org/>

The love Swami Gnanananda had for his guru Sri Swami Sivaratna Giri of Jyotir Mutt shines through in the book ‘SADGURU GNANANANDA’ published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1993.

References to his master by the swami were rare and invariably brief ... emotion surged in his heart and obstructed the flow of words.

One night as Gnanananda was sleeping on the banks of Chandrabhaga, he was awakened by an old Brahmin who had a message for him. He informed Gnanananda that he (Gnanananda) was destined to meet his guru right there at Pandharpur. As Gnanananda waited on the old man to emerge from his bath at the river, the messenger never did return. Gnanananda made enquiries which then lead him to Swami Sivaratna Giri. Gnanananda stood visibly moved in his august presence.

Gnanananda describes this sacred moment,

“This world is a river in spate with strong currents of strife, sorrow and agony threatening to engulf us. But good fortune it was that rescued me from these dangers and seated me firmly on the effulgent rock of Sivaratna. His grace enveloped and took full possession of me in time before I was drowned. My master was waiting for me under a tree on the shore and the powerful glow of his eyes drew me automatically to him like a magnet.”

The boy (Gnanananda) overwhelmed by emotion begged the swami for permission to render service to the master. Sri Swami Sivaratna Giri acknowledged his profound devotion by commanding him, “Keep my Kamandalu (water pot) ever filled with Theertha (holy water)”.

Swami then followed his guru like a shadow and derived great delight in serving him.

When Subrahmanyam (Gnanananda's original name) was thirty nine years of age his guru Sri Swami Sivaratna Giri indicated that he wanted to shed his mortal form. Subrahmanyam was initiated in the traditional manner into the Giri order of Jyotir Mutt and was given the monastic name Sri Gnanananda Giri.



Adi Sankara And Lord Shiva



Photo 15 Sankara with his disciples

Photo courtesy of <http://www.vanamaliashram.org>

Adi Sankara was blessed to have the Darshan of Lord Shiva. The following story is sourced from 'SANKARA DIG VIJAYA - THE TRADITIONAL LIFE OF SRI SANKARACHARYA' by Madhava Vidyaranya published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 2005,.

When Sri Sankaracharya was on the banks of Varanasi with his disciples one afternoon, an outcaste came his way. His disciples shooed him out of their path. The outcaste questioned Sankara on the actions of his disciples and questioned him for allowing these, "You asked me to move aside and make way for you. To whom were your words addressed, to this body or the soul, O learned sir?"

After a lengthy discourse from the outcaste, Sankara was astonished and replied,

"He who is ever established in this consciousness is my guru worthy of respect be he an outcaste by birth." Scarcely had he finished speaking when the outcaste disappeared from sight and in his place appeared Lord Shiva....

Moved by joy, awe and devotion Sankara began to glorify Shiva with a hymn of praise which translated as "The sastra is of no use unless it is accompanied by the teacher's grace. Grace is useless unless it generates awakening. Awakening is purposeless unless it gives the knowledge of the supreme truth. Salutations to thee!"

Shiva then commands Sankara,

“I have tested the depth of your spiritual understanding. My blessings rest on you and Vyasa alike. Vyasa edited the Vedas.... you who have got a real understanding of the purport of the Vedas, should write a new commentary on the brahmasutras... then appoint competent disciples as guardians of the Vedic path in different parts of the country. Having accomplished all this you return to my state with the satisfaction of having fulfilled your mission.”



Paramahansa Yogananda And Sri Yukteswar



Photo 16 Yogananda with Yukteswar

Photo courtesy of www.myspace.com/anahatasacredsound

Paramahansa Yogananda in his ‘AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI’, Self Realization Fellowship, 1990 describes the sacred moment when he met his guru Sri Yukteswar.

Together Habu and I set out for a distant marketplace in the Bengali section of Banaras..... As Habu and I moved on I turned my head to survey a narrow inconspicuous lane. A Christ like man in the ochre robes of a Swami stood motionless at the end of the lane. Instantly and anciently familiar he seemed.

As Yogananda moved on, his feet felt heavy and numb. When he stopped to turn around, his feet became normal. When he turned away from the direction of the lane in which the swami stood his feet became heavy again.

Retracing my steps as though wing-shod I reached the narrow lane. My quick glance revealed the quiet figure steadily gazing in my direction. A few eager steps and I was at his feet.

Yogananda greeted the swami, “Gurudeva!”

Yogananda writes,

The divine face was the one I had seen in a thousand visions.

The swami responds to Yogananda's greeting, "O my own you have come to me!"

Yogananda writes,

My guru uttered the words again and again in Bengali his voice tremulous with joy.

Yukteswar continues, "How many years I had waited for you!"

Yogananda writes,

We entered an oneness of silence.

Holding Yogananda's hand, Yukteswar led him away to his residence. As they walked along, Yukteswar told Yogananda,

"I shall give you my hermitages and all I possess."

But that was not what Yogananda wanted and he spoke his mind.

"Sir I come for wisdom and God realization. Those are your treasure troves I am after!"

"I give you my unconditional love," promised Yukteswar to the young lad. He continued, "Will you give me the same unconditional love?"

"I will love you eternally Gurudeva!" Yogananda promised him in return. And so began a divine relationship between master and student.

Lahiri Mahasaya and Babaji



Photo 17 Lahiri and Babaji

Photo courtesy of <http://vishwananda4mauriti.us.wordpress.com>

An account of Lahiri Mahasaya's (Shama Churn Lahiree) first encounter with his guru Babaji is narrated by Lahiri's grandson Satya Charan Lahiree to Dr. Ashoke Kumar Chatterjee in 'PURANA PURUSHA YOGIRAJ SRI SHAMA CHURN LAHIREE'.

On 23rd November 1868, Shama Churn received the order for His transfer to Ranikhet. Leaving his family behind, he set out for Ranikhet which is situated in the Himalayas in northern India.

One day Shama Churn, accompanied by armed guards and orderlies proceeding along the solitary hill path carrying official cash with him suddenly heard someone calling Him by his name.

"Shama Churn, come here"

The voice echoed in the mountain and reverberated in the ears of Shama Churn and he was amazed that who might call him by his name in this mountainous region filled with forests. Then he saw a Sanyasin at the top of the mountain calling his name. He proceeded towards the Sanyasin spell bound to find him bear a gentle smile on his face with fatherly affection in his eyes.

The Sanyasin hastily came down the hill top and stood before Him. The Sanyasin said, "Shama Churn, do not be afraid, I knew you would be coming by this path, I have been waiting for you. Complete your office task quickly and come to my hermitage at the top of the hill".

Shama Churn brooded over this after his office work and at last decided to meet the Sanyasin. He walked along the lonely mountain path to find the hermitage after an exhaustive travel along the forest.

Shama Churn bowed to the Sanyasin and the Sanyasin asked him,

“How strange Shama Churn, can’t you recognize me? Can you recollect having come here before? Can’t you recognize this tiger skin, this ascetic’s bowl also? Have you forgotten everything?”

Shama Churn failed to remember any of them and said – “I have never come here before. I cannot recognize them; they must belong to somebody else.”

The Sanyasin stated, “Listen Shama Churn, all these are the play of illusion. It is this illusion which has made you forget all these things.” Saying this the Sanyasin lightly touched Shama Churn. An electric current traversed throughout his body. The whole universe evanesced from Shama Churn. This caused Him to recollect his previous life of Sadhana and understood the great Sanyasin as His Guru in His previous birth. With tearful eyes, Shama Churn prostrated at the feet of the Sanyasin for he now retrieved the nearest one of all His births and rebirths.

The Sanyasin continued, “You have practiced yoga Sadhana in your previous birth here. I have preserved your things with utmost care. Your life ended here and you were born as Gourmohan’s son and since then I have been observing all your aspects. I have arranged for your transfer here to impart initiation into yoga to you. I have been waiting for you here since last 40 years.”

After this the great Sanyasin initiated Him into Kriyayoga. Shama Churn attained the state of non-dynamism and became engrossed in Samadhi. A golden era of yoga culture in India commenced the very moment Shama Churn’s initiation into yoga occurred and this initiation roused His latent spiritual faculties and powers. From then onwards Shama Churn would daily finish his official duties early and engage Himself in the austere practice of Sadhana.

After some time Babaji informed Him that he has to leave the cave and go elsewhere as the habitat was gradually becoming crowded rendering it unfit for Sadhana-oriented habitation. To Shama Churn who wanted to leave everything and follow Babaji, he replied that He will have to remain in the family ambit as a complete householder and practice austere Sadhana. Babaji Maharaja adorned Shama Churn with the esoteric essence of yoga Sadhana before sending Him to the field of worldly action where the superficial aspect of the material world could not affect Him in the least.

Since ages vexed householders have prayed to their respective deities, thus – “O God, show us such a path that will enable us to practice Sadhana by remaining within the family. Barring family life, we cannot practice Sadhana. O Bhagawan sends such a guide who being a family man himself, can show the true path to householders.”

Shama Churn descended on the earth with a noble vow. He had pledged to householders that He would show them a marvellous, skilful facile path of yoga. Now providence pulled Shama Churn towards the path He was destined to take.



Lama Surya Das And Lama Yeshe

Lama Surya Das in 'AWAKENING THE BUDDHA WITHIN', Bantam Books, 1997, speaks about his sacred moment with Lama Yeshe.

The first time we met I remember that he asked me what I was looking for and I had to honestly admit that I didn't exactly know. He said, "Let's see if we can't find out *together*."

Together was a magical word!

First Encounters with My Guru

Tavatiru Rengaraja Desigar

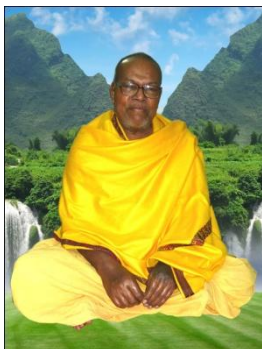


Photo 18 Rengaraja Desigar
Photo courtesy of Ganesen & Maran, Malaysia

Nadaraja greeted me on arrival at the Agathiyar Sanmarga Sangam, Ongkara Kudil, Turaiyur on my first visit to India in 2003. asked if I could see its patron saint Tavatiru Rengaraja Desigar. Nadaraja replied I could see him when he comes in for the evening prayer. I was asked to wait. I was served tea. After a while Nadaraja told me Swami had an appointment with a couple of businessman from Bombay shortly and I was given the opportunity to meet the Swami after their meeting. However before I saw Swami, Nadaraja told me he had the task of taking me around their premises and showing me the facilities that they had put up at the ashram. He was grateful to Malaysians for their donations that went towards the construction and maintenance of the buildings and facilities and the daily activity of feeding the poor in and around Turaiyur.

As he ended the tour of the office, kitchen, stores, lodges and other related buildings, he gasped aloud to find that the two visitors had left. He hurried me along to a building, praying that Swami should still be around to see me. And to our joy, Swami was still there, seated alone on the floor in a corner of the room. There was an aid standing at the doorway to another room. Nadaraja introduced me to Swami. I entered the room and prostrated in front of Swami.

I never expected to have a personal audience with Swami. I had specifically included this visit as part of my tour. I came to know Swami and his work through his organization based in Dengkil, Malaysia. I had high respects for swami as his nadi readings published by his organization carried praises for the swami from the Sidhas. He was said to be the Avatar of Ramalinga Adigal.

Then I asked him to bless me. He did not reply. Fearing he might not have heard me I asked him again. There was no reply. I asked him again. Finally, he replied that coming to Ongkara Kudil in itself was a blessing. I did not know how to receive his answer. I began to question myself if I was not good enough to receive his blessings.

Upon returning to Malaysia, I shared this happening with the devotees at Agathiyar Sanmarga Sangam in Dengkil and they were surprised that I was allowed a private audition with Swami. I was

told the organization had laid certain rules to restrict the inflow of devotees coming to see Swami, which was taking much of Swami's time and hindering his meditation. Devotees were required to bring along fruits and flowers that were customary when visiting Swamis and cash of Rs 1, 000. I understood later upon reading the nadi revelations of the Swami published by the organization, that these were the sidha's directive to new devotees who wanted to have a Darshan of the Swami. It did not occur to me to bring these offerings during my visit nor did Nadaraja enlighten me on the procedures.

I received a message through my friend Murali who had listened to 'Saint Avaiyar's Kural' that came on the air. It seems Avaiyar had cautioned those who were doing tapas (tavam) to refrain from cursing others, and to my surprise, to refrain from blessing others too. It seems the strength of spiritual practice (tava valimai) would reduce by doing both. Maybe this was another reason Swami did not bless me. Swami was already nearing the end of his tavam then.

I realized Swami did not bless me for the above reason.

Andrew Harvey questions Mother Meera (His Guru) in 'HIDDEN JOURNEY-A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING', published by Penguin Books USA Inc., 1992,

"Can I receive your light?" and she replies "You are receiving it. One day you will see it,"

I realized Swami did not need to bless me separately as I was receiving it already.

When a seeker turns up before Yogi Ramsuratkumar for answers to life's sufferings the yogi explains why he could not help the seeker.

A young American man with a shaved head who had just come from seeing Anandamayee Ma, a famous North Indian Saint, appears one evening while we are sitting with Swami. He tells Swami he realizes that pain and suffering are everywhere and has come to India to find out what is the root cause of suffering before he goes out to practice medicine. Swami first asks him what a dirty beggar like Him could possibly tell a Harvard grad. Swami listens nicely to the man for about two hours and then the man leaves. A few minutes after the man leaves, Swami turns to us and says that "this beggar could do nothing for that man."

About ten minutes later, Swami tells us that Anandamayee Ma had made a blessing over that man's head and that He did not want to disturb it.

I realized Swami did not bless me for he did not want to disturb what was given by Tavayogi as I was now a disciple of Tavayogi having taken Diksha from him and had his blessings too.

Then Agathiyar answers in the nadi reading in 2008 that I was not ready to meet Swami during my first visit; that I had gone to see him without being aware of his greatness. I was asked to go again and I shall be received well this time around. I have yet to meet him.

Supramania Swami



Photo 19 Supramania Swami poses for me the first time I meet him in 2003

I went in search of an astrologer to chart my second daughter's future but instead took him as my guru. He revealed, not my daughters future but, my future instead without looking neither into my palm or my charts nor with any other aid. The words of revelation mystically came from him as he sat upright in the Padmasana pose on his deer skin which was spread on the cold cement floor of his humble home in a village known as Nachananthal, eight kilometres away from the town of Tiruvannamalai.

I had come to the end of my pilgrimage to India in 2003. I undertook this pilgrimage on the instructions of the Agathiyar through the Nadi reading. I was to perform atonements for my past Karmas by way of visiting certain temples and submitting my offerings to the deities, the Brahmins, the devotees, the poor and the animals too. I was told in the nadi that I would meet my guru in an unexpected way and in an unexpected place soon. He would guide me with further instructions for spiritual advancement. When I did not meet the said guru on my last leg of the pilgrimage, I consoled myself it may be another moment, and another place; it might even take place back in Malaysia.

Just prior to leaving for India my wife reminded me that we had not charted our daughter's future and asked that I seek an astrologer in India. When I had completed my worship and Girivalam of Arunachala in Tiruvannamalai I asked Deivanthiran from Chennai, my appointed chauffeur, if he knew any astrologer. He told me he had an uncle in a village eight kilometres from Tiruvannamalai and that he was an astrologer. I was driven over to Nachananthal to meet Supramania Swami. As I alighted from the white Ambassador and walked into the walled compound, an elderly man who I presumed was the Swami approached us from a shed to the left of the entrance. Deivanthiran introduced me as a tourist he was accompanying and told him my intention of coming over to have my daughter's astrological chart drawn up. The Swami did not say a word but instead led us to his prayer room. He lighted camphor and prayed. Then he asked Deivanthiran to place his deer skin outside and his son Ramajayam to bring out the Panjagam.

We sat outside the house. I prepared myself to listen to the astrological revelation of my daughter's future. However, what he did was to talk about my future and me. The first thing he mentioned was, "Now that you have arrived in Tiruvannamalai, all is over for you." I did not ask what he meant by that. He mentioned this couple of times. I reckoned he meant that I came back 'home' - to the shadows of my Lord after having strayed away for several births and forty-four years of this lifetime.

As we sat there together Supramania Swami revealed new happenings that were about to take place in my life. He could tell a number of intimate things about the life and mission I was to face. I listened attentively. I did not question him. As he was narrating all this happenings to be, I could not help but break down. I cried like a child. I cried for blessings I had received from God until that very moment. I realized how much God loved me then. Swami made me realize the blessings that I have had. As I, cried Supramania Swami added that I would be coming back repeatedly.

Swami surprised me further when he mentioned that I would build a temple in India in Tiruvannamalai, set up a Peedham and that I will have a place here too. I cried aloud again. Agathiyar had told me in the nadi reading that I would have to assist financially in the construction of temples; after which I would have to build one for him. My confusion as to where I should build the temple had been cleared when Supramania Swami told me it was to be in Tiruvannamalai. But how did he know? I had not mentioned the nadi to him. Neither did I talk about it to Devendran.

He spoke about himself. He mentioned that he had been going around Arunachala (Girivalam) on full moon days, for the past thirty years now, but could not do it the night before due to ill health. If he had walked the Girivalam path we might have crossed path. But even though he did not go on Girivalam that night, I was brought to him! I realized that seeing him over an astrological chart was only a reason to be with him. He was waiting for me.

When Devendran did mention to Swami that it took me nine hours compared to three hours for others to go around Arunachala on Girivalam, Swami replied, "Of course it would take that long for he had been stopping over at all the places of worship and ashrams."

He mentioned his masters. He had five of them. Amongst them was his own father, Jayaraman Pillai, Pundi Mahan (Atru Swami), Sathanandha Swami of Salem (author of 'KANDHAR GURU KAVASAM'), Kollimalai Swami and Yogi Ramsuratkumar (Visiri Swami).

The yogi, he said had placed him under 'house arrest' once. Swami was asked to meditate at the yogi's residence for five days. Initially the yogi had asked him to stay at his (yogi's) place but later decided that Swami should be with his family.

After the yogi had gone into Samadhi, he appeared at Swami's doorsteps in his village home in Nachananthal at 11 pm and delivered a painting of him only to walk away into the darkness and out of sight.

Swami pointed out the degree of respect and faith a student should have on the master by narrating the story of Guhai Namasivaya and his disciple Guru Namasivaya.

When his guru asked that Guru Namasivaya dispose off his vomit in a place out of bounds of human, the dedicated disciple drinks the vomit of his guru.

Supramania Swami mentioned that the following activities have to be done in secrecy:

1. prayers (pooja) - a reminder to me to pray silently for I used to scream my head off at prayers. How did he know?
2. consuming food (bhojanam) - he preferred to remain hungry rather than take outside food,
3. and sex (maithunam).

I was blessed to receive Guru Upadesa in the form of a Mantra Diksha that beautiful day. He asked that I chant the mantra for half an hour each day. “Just as a silversmith polishes his wares we too shall slowly work on IT till we achieve IT,” said Swami. Swami asked me to get a mat made of Tharbai grass for use as a seat during meditation.

“Take him back with you”, he said, referring to Arunachala, as he stood hands together in prayer for me, and as I bid him farewell. I spent five hours with him on that blissful day.

When my nephew visited Swami later, Swami had mentioned that he wanted to build a temple for Lord Muruga in his village. Later during our correspondence through letters, he told me he wanted to build it in Tiruvannamalai. He scouted for a piece of land in the vicinity of his guru Yogi Ramsuratkumar’s Ashram while we gathered the funds required for the purchase and construction of the temple. Swami and his family used to monitor the works by day and return to the village at night. I suggested that Swami build an accommodation for himself and move into it while working on the temple. So Swami put up a Kudil and stayed in it.

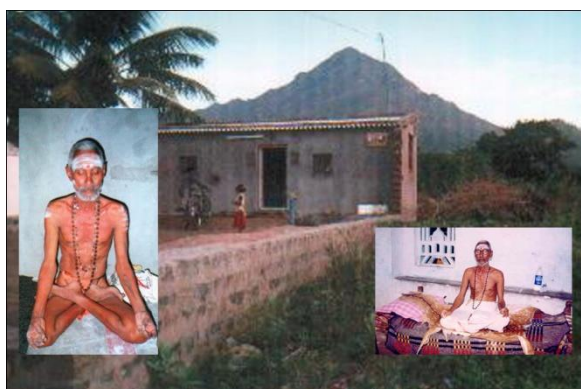


Photo 20 Clockwise: Supramania Swami at his altar in his Kudil; Swami’s Kudil in Tiruvannamalai; Swami at his village home in Nachananthal.

One day a man appeared at the road in front of Swami’s Kudil and called him over. He asked Swami why he who was on the path of Gnana was now stepping back onto the path of Bakthi. This question posed by him, made Swami realize that this was no ordinary man. Swami realized there was a message conveyed to him and immediately decided to stop construction of the temple.

On my second pilgrimage to India in 2005 on the instruction of Agathiyar again and also on the invitation of my guru Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal, I paid my respects to Supramania Swami on arrival in India.

As I stepped into Swami's Kudil that had been built in Tiruvannamalai I was met at the door by his wife. I was meeting her for the first time. Then Swami appeared from his prayer room. I was in tears seeing him. I fell at his feet and remained there until he picked me up and consoled me. He led me back into the prayer room. He laid a mat on the floor and had me sit on it. He presented me a gift – a Kavi.

Swami's wife and Ramajayam left to purchase some groceries when Swami invited me to prayer. He lighted a camphor and started chanting his guru's name,

Yogi Ramsuratkumar,
Yogi Ramsuratkumar,
Yogi Ramsuratkumar,
Jaya Gururaya

We had hardly done ten minutes of chanting when I heard a third voice, that of a male. Who could probably be chanting with us? After into twenty minutes of chanting Swami ended the chant and walked out of the room. I forgot entirely about that happening. We talked throughout the night. It was 2.40 am when I retired to bed but Swami was still awake rolling his rosary and chanting.

Upon awakening Swami mentions an amazing happening that took place after I slept. A lady and a child entered the Kudil and sat on the floor between us. Swami was watching from his bed and listening on their conversation. The lady was dressed in a rainbow colour sari and was carrying a feeding bottle of the same colour. After a while the boy told his mother, "Let's see if there is oil in the lamp at the altar," and they both enter Swami's prayer room. Swami waited for them to come out of the room. When they did not come out for some time, he got off his bed and went over to the room only to witness an empty room! Swami exclaimed, "The mother and child had followed you to the Kudil and never came out of the prayer room!" and he cried. I too cried.

Swami took me to worship at the Sri Ranganathar temple in Thiruveragam, Arunachala temple, his guru Yogi Ramsuratkumar's Samadhi, Ramana Maharshi's Samadhi, and Seshadari Swami's Samadhi. In the evening I set out to perform the Girivalam a second time with Ramajayam accompanying me this time. As we returned to the Kudil at 2.00 am upon completion of the Girivalam, Swami and his wife greeted us. They had waited on us.

As I packed to leave for Kallar to meet Tavayogi, Swami passed his blanket saying it would come useful in the cold weather of Ooty.

After Tavayogi had taken me on a pilgrimage of Sidha shrines, temple and samadhis I returned to Supramania Swami. On arrival Swami asked me if I had heard 'the voice'. Then I suddenly remembered the third voice I heard during chanting of the yogi's name earlier. I asked him who it was and he replies coolly that it was his guru who chanted with us. I was surprised and amazed because the yogi had gone into Samadhi!



Photo 21 Supramania Swami with Yogi Ramsuratkumar in a digitally edited photo

I revealed the reason I had taken the trouble to help him build a temple. I related a story which Tavatiru Rengaraja Desigar mentioned in one of his books 'POTRINAL UNATHU VINAI AGALUM APPA', Sri Agathiyar Sanmarga Sangam, 1992. Lord Muruga as Sidha Supramaniam was in search of a place where he could meditate peacefully. He came across Agathiyar's hermitage. Agathiyar offered a place for Supramaniam to meditate and offered to take care of his needs. Upon completion of his Tapas the Supramaniam wanted to pass on an upadesam to Agathiyar in gratitude for his hospitality but could not do so as Agathiyar was way beyond sixty years of age and Supramaniam had already attained the body of light. Supramaniam promised that he shall meet Agathiyar in his next birth. Agathiyar took rebirth in the north and went searching for a true guru only to meet frauds. Not finding what he came in search of, he searched in vain for a true guru until he exhausted his karma. Then he met Supramaniam in Kodaikanal. Supramaniam helps Agathiyar remember his past. Supramaniam who created language and had it written in suvadis passed it on to Agathiyar. Supramaniam taught Agathiyar the art of breath control (Vasi) and kindled his Kundalini. Supramaniam created a great yogi in Agathiyar and granted Agathiyar the title 'Guru Muni'.

So the moment Supramania Swami mentioned that he wanted to build the temple and asked me to help finance the project, I took it upon myself as a mission. I told swami it was selfish of me and that I expected I could gain similar merits like what Agathiyar had received when he took care of Supramaniam's needs.

The moment Swami heard my confession without a second thought he told me all his Tavam was for me! Such was the greatness of my guru Supramania Swami that he should give away all the merits he had gained meticulously through the many efforts towards realizing the self.

Swami took me to his village home where he conducted a prayer and a feast before I bid him farewell.

Supramania Swami went into Samadhi at 10.20 am, on Wednesday, 7th February 2007 at his Kudil in Tiruvannamalai at the age of 65. When I was with him he mentioned that his lifespan was only 65. Ramajayam tells me he found Swami's diary after his Samadhi; he had written the exact date and time of his departure. This entry was dated 23rd May 2005. He had also written down how to attend to his body. Although he did not have a following, mysteriously a swami to whom Ramajayam served as a driver in Tiruvannamalai sent twenty sadhus from this movement to take care of Swami's last rites. Swami was laid to rest the same day within eight hours of his passing away as requested by him. Although he had mentioned that he be laid to rest at the Kudil, the Lord and his gurus decided to provide a better place of rest for their deserving disciple. Agathiyar, on 10th February 2007, told me Swami had gone into Samadhi at the right moment. He had been laid at the right spot and that his Samadhi shall gain fame. On 24th July 2007, Agathiyar mentions Supramania Swami was the first guru I went searching for and that he was a true guru. Agathiyar asked that I chant Swami's name and miracles shall take place in my home.

Just as he had had his guru Yogi Ramsuratkumar appear in his Kudil, after the yogi went into Samadhi, during the chanting which I was witness to, Supramania Swami makes his presence known at my home after his Samadhi.

As my wife and I sat in the living room after the usual evening prayers, we could sense the strong aroma of tobacco in our home. The thought whether Supramania Swami was present with us strikes me. Almost immediately my hand phone rings and stops short of a ring. To my amazement the telephone number used by Supramania Swami appears. I knew the number was terminated upon Swami passing away. I called the number only to be answered by someone in Coimbatore. He told me he did not call me. I called up Swami's son Ramajayam who confirms that Swami's number was no more in use and had been terminated.

And so I narrated this mysterious happening to my nephew on the phone. When I ended my conversation I realize there was a missed call. Supramania Swami's number appeared again!

I have come to realize that the Gods work in mysterious ways. When I arrived in India Deivanthiran who came to fetch me at the airport at Chennai told me that he had taken over the task of chauffeuring me around since Raji who was assigned to me came down with a fever. Was that a coincidence or was it the work of fate? Was it a coincidence or was it the work of fate that Deivanthiran should take me to meet Supramania Swami?

I am forever grateful and indebted to Supramania Swami who opened my eyes to devotion (Bakthi) towards God and guru by his exemplary lifestyle.

Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal

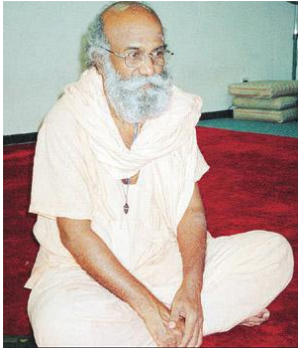


Photo 22 Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal
Photo courtesy of the New Straits Times Malaysia.

When Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal came to propagate the message of the Sidhas to Malaysians, he accepted me as his disciple amongst many others.

I did not subscribe to any dailies but during the period of Tavayogi's visit to Malaysia, but my neighbour Augustine used to give me a complimentary copy of a Tamil language daily every day. This newspaper carried news about Tavayogi's visit and the opening of an Agathiyar Gnana Peedham in Batu Caves. I called the number advertised in the papers for an appointment to see Tavayogi.

The name Thangarasan was familiar to me. So I went through my belongings looking for a pamphlet that I was given by the nadi reader when I went for my first reading. Tavayogi, then known as Thai Veedu Thangarasan, had circulated the pamphlet informing the public about his intention in building a new temple for Agathiyar at Kallar.

On the day of appointment as I walked into the office space on the second floor of this premise I saw Tavayogi with two others. After exchanging greetings I was told by Appana Nagappan to go ahead with Tavayogi while he had to attend to certain matters with Perumal. Tavayogi lead me into another room and sat down on the carpeted floor. I followed him. I handed the pamphlet that I had brought along and asked if it was his. He answered that it was him alright.

I told him that I had seen the nadi in 2002 and was directed to worship Sidhas. He asked me to narrate what was said in the nadi. He listened attentively and told me I had come to the right place.

Appana hands me a couple of posters of Agathiyar and the Sidhas. Tavayogi blesses with vibhuti Prasad. I fall at his feet to which Tavayogi takes me to task saying I should only fall at the feet of Agathiyar. Then I notice there was a Pathugai. Almost spontaneously I was overcome with emotion and cried my heart out at the feet of Agathiyar. When I regained my composure I asked Tavayogi if I had done much Karma since I only had to opportunity to know of the nadi, Agathiyar

and the Sidhas when I was forty-three years of age. Tavayogi consoled me, "Be grateful that at least you got the opportunity and came to this realization now at this age."

It is mentioned in the 'AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI' by Paramahansa Yogananda, published by Self-Realization Fellowship, 1990,

It was not until the disciple (Lahiri Mahasaya) had reached his thirty-third year that Babaji deemed the time ripe for re-establishing openly the never-severed link. After the brief meeting near Ranikhet, the selfless guru did not keep the beloved disciple by his side, but released Lahiri Mahasaya for an outward world mission.

Tavayogi narrated a story of a guru and a disciple on a journey where they meet a young attractive girl who would not cross the river for fear of drowning. Therefore, the guru lifted her on his shoulders and crossed the heavily swollen river with the disciple following behind. On reaching the other shore, the guru left the girl behind and continued the journey. The disciple, who was very disturbed by what he had seen, eventually blurted out his uneasiness and unhappiness at what the guru had done. He questioned his guru. The guru replied, "I had carried the burden on my shoulders and left it behind as soon as I had reached the shores while you have been carrying it with you until now." Similarly Tavayogi reminded me to let the past be.

From Yogananda's 'AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI', Yukteswar advises a new student who occasionally expressed doubts regarding his own worthiness to engage in yoga practice.

"Forget the past," Sri Yukteswar would console him. "The vanished lives of all men are dark with many shames. Human conduct is ever unreliable until anchored in the Divine. Everything in future will improve if you are making a spiritual effort now."

Tavayogi then led me out of the room where he showed me photographs of the many activities conducted at his ashram. Tavayogi invited me to bring my family along for his discourses at the Peedham.

My wife and I received a Mantra Diksha from Tavayogi, together with others from the Agathiyar Gnana Peedham. But surprisingly Agathiyar in the nadi asked me to request the antra Diksha again from Tavayogi which surprised both of us. Tavayogi then gave me the Diksha again in private.

Since Tavayogi invited me to his ashram and Agathiyar had asked me to spend some time at Tavayogi's ashram, I took heed of their invitation and made my second pilgrimage to India in 2005.

As I approached Thuripaalam, some devotees who Tavayogi had sent out spotted me and took me to up the small hill to the ashram. Tavayogi greeted me with a hug. He pulled up a chair and offered me some fruits. He asked me if I would like to take my bath at the river or at the Peedham. I opted for the river. We walked along the railway line serving Mettupalayam and Ooti that ran in front of Tavayogi's ashram. After some distance we stepped onto a path that took us down to the river that had its source in the mountains of Ooti.

Prayers at the Peedham were simple. Tavayogi lighted camphor and started singing a couple of Hymns on the Sidhas, followed by the rests of the disciples singing the names of the Sidhas (Sridhar Potri).



Photo 23 Clockwise: Feeding the poor at Tavayogi's ashram; Tavayogi at the banks of the river that passes through his ashram; at the entrance to the Peedham; inside the Peedham; outside Tavayogi's ashram.

After prayers and meditation, we set off to the wholesale market at Mettupalayam. When we returned to the ashram, Nadaraja, Tavayogi's faithful aid and cook had already prepared dinner – *idli* and *sambar*. We retired early as there was no electricity supply at the ashram.

The morning after I arrived at Tavayogi's ashram doors, he invited me to join him for his daily morning walks. I took it as a privilege to accompany the guru on a quiet morning walk. Just before we started out he threw me his shawl saying it was a cold morning and that I might need it to keep me warm. Never did I realise at that moment the significant of this gesture on his part. He was to perform a miracle at the Agnipurisarwarar temple where Agathiyar had promised through the nadi reading that he would open his eyes.

Tavayogi asked if I wanted to go to Ooti or Sivanmalai. I chose Sivanmalai in Kangayam. Sivavakiyar had meditated in a cave at the Murugan temple on this hill. We then left for Uthiyur. Strong winds blew here just as at Sivanmalai as we made our way up a flight of stairs, crossed a few hillocks, passed through the dense undergrowth, and treaded the rocky terrain to arrive at the cave where Konganar had meditated. As the winds kept blowing consistently Tavayogi uttered, "Hold one, we are coming" and turning around to me he added, "The Sidhas are inviting us."

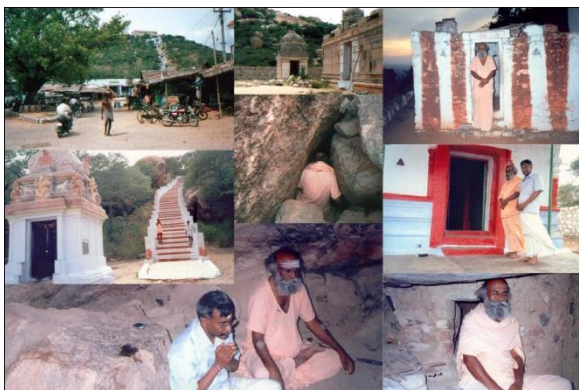


Photo 24 The 1st leg of my pilgrimage with Tavayogi. Clockwise: Sivanmalai; Deserted temple in Kangayam; Punakeeswarar Samadhi at Chennimalai; Murugan temple in the jungles of Kangayam; Tavayogi in his Cave at Kangayam; Tavayogi squeezing through an opening into Konganar's Cave; Inside Konganar's Cave.

There were a few openings in these caves. Tavayogi crawled into one and I followed him. This cave was just sufficient to accommodate both of us. Tavayogi told me he had occupied this cave during his earlier days of roaming the length and breadth of India in search of answers. Tavayogi broke down in tears as he started to sing some hymns on Agathiyar. I cried too.

Then Tavayogi took me to the adjacent cave where Konganar had sat in meditation. Tavayogi slide down a small opening between several boulders to reach a large cave inside. Tavayogi sang a couple of hymns on Agathiyar. I closed my eyes. Upon opening them, Tavayogi applied the sacred on my forehead and gave me some to bring back with me. As we prepared to leave, I asked him why he was leaving behind the sacred ash. He looked at the ash in a piece of newspaper and questioned me if I had brought the ash along? I answered in the negative. We both looked at the old man who had accompanied us from the Peedham. He answered he did not bring it either.

As we drove towards our next destination, Chennimalai, Tavayogi revealed to us, "The Sidhas had come. They had blessed us; they had showered flowers on us. They were extremely happy," he added. He then asked me, "Do you now understand the reason for your journey?" I could only nod my head in amazement.

On arrival at Chennimalai Murugan temple grounds, we made our way over a flight of stairs to the Samadhi of Punakeeswarar. Tavayogi tried to enter a narrow opening in the rock face but could not fit. We sat outside the opening and meditated. I came to understand that the 'KANDA SHASTI KAVACHAM' was first offered to the world in this temple by Balan Devaraya Swami.

The sun had already set as we started back for Kallar. On the way back we stopped at a Mariamman temple near Mettupalayam where Tavayogi had taken shelter when he lost his eyesight earlier in life. The temple was closed for the night.

The following day Tavayogi took me to Sargurunathar's Cave; while Mani, a local resident of Ooti, took us to Suyan Jhoti Swami's ashram; a Mariamman temple; and Dayananda Swami's home. On the way, back Tavayogi explained to me the spiritual state of each of these Swamis.



Photo 25 The 2nd leg of my pilgrimage with Tavayogi. From top left clockwise: In Sargurunathar's Cave & Ashram, Outside Sargurunathar's Cave & Ashram, Mettupalayam - Ooti Road; at the Mariamman temple in Ooti; With Dayananda Swami in Ooti; at Tavatiru Suyanjhothi Swami's Satguru Sathya Raja yoga Seva Gnana Ashram in Kasolai.

The next day was spent at the ashram. Tavayogi related the story of how he came to put up his ashram in Kallar. The Aaru Aatare Peedham was fashioned based on exact measurements and guidance given by Agathiyar to Tavayogi. It was one massive piece of granite weighing 1,250 kg that was cut into seven numbers of receding steps. It was made out of a solid piece of granite elsewhere and then transported by lorry to the foot of the hill. The Peedham had to be carried across the railway lines that passed in front of the ashram and up the hill and into the prayer room. When he was lost for ideas, Agathiyar appears to Tavayogi and assured him all will be well. Someone then suggests bringing in an elephant for the job. Finally the Peedham was placed in position short of a few days before its installation and celebrations.

Tavayogi enlightened me about the greatness of his guru Chitramuthu Adigal and Paramaguru Jeganathar.

Early evening, we went downtown to purchase groceries and vegetables for the feast that I wanted to give to the locals.

Later that evening Tavayogi brought out bundles of nadi that were in his possession. They were of various sizes and lengths. He read to me transcribes of the nadi jotted down in notebooks. He passed me the one on his daughter. In it, Agathiyar consoles Tavayogi's daughter who was saddened since Tavayogi had left the family to become a mendicant. Agathiyar reveals that Tavayogi had a bigger mission than that of a householder.

Word was sent out that free food would be served. Tavayogi conducted prayers at 11 am. Food was served at noon. I asked Tavayogi if the Sidhas were present at the Peedham to receive our prayers. Tavayogi questioned me back, "What! Do you think they are not around?", since he must have thought I doubted their presence. I had asked him if they were around numerous times; at the Peedham, in the caves and at the Samadhi that we visited.

The next day as we left on the second leg of our tour, "Only now our actual journey begins," said Tavayogi with a big grin on his face and a twinkle in his eyes. We were headed for Agasthiyampalli in Vedharanyam, Pothigai, Courtallam, and Palani as instructed in the nadi. He was just as excited as I was.



Photo 26 The 3rd leg of my pilgrimage with Tavayogi. Clockwise: Tavayogi at Breehadeshwar temple; Agathiyar opens his eyes; At Karuvurar temple; Outside Agasthiyar's temple at Agasthiyampalli; Tavayogi with Agathiyar.

A temple priest rushed up to meet us as we alighted from the car at the Agnipureeswarar temple at Agasthiyampalli and brought us straight to Agathiyar's shrine. As Tavayogi started to sing the hymns, he interrupted him and directed us to go round the temple grounds and pray at Lord Shiva's shrine before coming back here. Tavayogi looked at me. Both of us were equally puzzled. We did as instructed. At Shiva's shrine he lighted the camphor. He brought us out to the open and placed his thumb on the ground and indicated the spot where Agathiyar had pressed his thumb to balance the earth that was tilted due to the presence of the Gods at Shiva and Parvathy's wedding. He told us he had to leave for another temple and rushed off.

Tavayogi sang the usual songs in praise of Agathiyar. I continued with chanting the names of the Sidhas. Agathiyar had yet to open his eyes. I cried for his blessings. Agathiyar did not open his eyes. Tavayogi left the shrine to go out into the open. I then closed my eyes in contemplation of the form of Agathiyar. Agathiyar's heart did not mellow. Saddened, I joined Tavayogi outside. He called me to his side and pointed out to me that Agathiyar was opening and closing his eyes. I peered hard but did not see this miracle take place. I could not even make out the granite statue of Agathiyar from where I stood much less see him open his eyes. We both returned to the shade of the temple in disappointment when Tavayogi motions me to take a seat beside the statue of Agathiyar while he took a photograph of us. I made my way to the Mulastanam but stopped short of entering it for it was not our privilege to enter the sacred inner sanctum, even though Tavayogi encouraged me. Just as I began to take my place on the threshold of the inner chamber Tavayogi threw me his shawl and lo! What do you know the sage opened his left eye!

I left Agasthiyampalli amazed at what had taken place. Who was the man who waited for our arrival and commanded us around? Later in the nadi reading Agathiyar tells me he was on hand to greet us cheerfully at Agasthiyampalli that day!

We arrived at the Breehadeshwar temple at 3.00 pm. Tavayogi only prayed at the Siddha Samadhi and caves. As the temples in India are closed from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm, Tavayogi laid his shawl on the ground in a shaded spot in front of the magnificent Nandi to take a nap. I went around snapping some photographs. Karuvurar's Samadhi which was at the back of this famed Chola temple was open. As I entered the temple the caretaker who was cleaning the oil lamps called me in, lighted the camphor, extended the flame to me, and gave me the sacred ash. I came back to the

spot where Tavayogi was napping. He invited me to share his shawl. I lay down beside him on his shawl. At 4.00 pm when the temple doors were opened to the public, Tavayogi went straight to Karuvurar's shrine. The caretaker who attended to me earlier attended to Tavayogi too. Tavayogi sat at the shrine in meditation. I followed him. Some pilgrims who had taken shelter away from the scorching sun were conversing loudly. The caretaker drove them away creating a peaceful environment for us to meditate.

Why did Tavayogi choose to wait until 4.00 pm since Karuvurar's temple and Samadhi was not closed for the afternoon?

Tavayogi had offered his shawl thrice to me. He gave it to me to keep me warm against the cold air at Kallar when we started on our morning walk; he gave it to me to lay it down on the floor before I sat at Agathiyar's shrine in Agasthiyampalli; he shared his shawl now at Breehadeshwar temple grounds where we lay down to rests.

I ponder Swami Muktananda's description of a true guru again from 'Kundalini - The Secret of Life', Siddha Yoga Publication, 1994,

The guru is the grace bestowing power of God. The entire body of such a guru has become permeated with *Shakti*. In fact the guru becomes the embodiment of Shakti to such an extent that the hat he wears, his clothes, and the mat on which he sits become permeated with it, and just by touching them, a disciple can receive Shakti.

Tavayogi took me to Saraswati Mahal, King Sarobhoji's palace converted into a museum that housed his vast collection of English books, portraits, old writings and numerous nadis and sidha works.

We left for the famous holiday spot, Agathiyar Falls at Papanasam in the Pothigai hills. After taking a bath we walk up a flight of steps to Kalyana Theertam. There was a shrine for Agathiyar at the Shiva temple. Tavayogi told me that this was the place where Agathiyar had meditated and attained Mukti. I was told this was also the place where the Sidhas come down in the form of light after 11.00 pm daily. Impressed by the talk that one could see Sidhas in light form at this place, I requested Tavayogi that we stay overnight to watch them but Tavayogi preferred to stay in the caves of Courtallam. Maran told me he did not see the statue of Agathiyar when he visited the temple later. Thayalan who had spent a night here only saw the statue of Agathiyar the next day. Was Agathiyar playing games with his devotees?

Coming down from Kalyana Theertam, we stopped to pray at a large temple dedicated to Agathiyar and another Shiva temple.

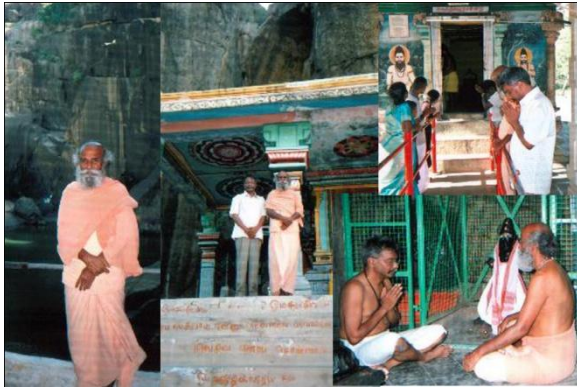


Photo 27 The 4th leg of the pilgrimage. Clockwise: At Kalyana Theertam at the foothills of Pothigai; Shiva temple at Kalyana Theertam; Agathiyar's temple at the foothills of Pothigai; Agathiyar's temple at Kalyana Theertam in Pothigai.

We started our hike from the famed Courtallam picnic spot to the caves of the Siddhas situated in the dense jungles of Pothigai hills. Tavayogi rushed up the jungle track, with me close on his heels, hoping to make it to the caves before dark. Strong winds blew again as we climbed the rocky terrain and made our way through the dense forests. It was a three kilometre walk uphill to the Siddha caves. Night set in as we arrived at the Shenbaga Devi Amman temple.

Yogi S A A Ramaiah in his book 'BABAJI GITA' says, the Shenbaga Devi Amman temple was built on the exact spot where Agathiyar initiated Maha Avatar Babaji or Baba Nagaraj into Kriya Kundalini Pranayam. Babaji, after leaving Kadhrgamam in Ceylon for the Pothigai Hills on the instruction of his guru Bhoganathar, had sat for days in meditation at this temple. Babaji adamantly went into penance until Agathiyar appeared in front of him.

M. Govindan in 'BABAJI AND THE 18 SIDDHAR KRIYA YOGA TRADITION', 1991, Kriya Yoga Publications (Reg), 196 Mountain Road, P. O. Box 90, Eastman, Quebec, Canada, JOE 1PO, <http://www.babaji.ca>, reproduced with permission via e-mail), narrates this episode,

Bhoganathar inspired his disciple, Babaji, to seek this objective of Siddhanta Yoga, and so directed him to seek initiation into Kriya Kundalini Pranayama or Vasi Yogam from the legendary Siddhar Agastiyar at Courtallam in the Pothigai hills of Tamil Nadu. Babaji travelled on foot to Courtallam and on arriving there at the Shakti Peedham, one of the sixty-four shrines throughout India dedicated to God as the Divine Mother, he made a solemn vow to remain at that spot until Agastiyar would initiate him into the secrets of yoga. On the forty-eight day, when Babaji was on the verge of complete collapse, with great longing, he simply repeated over and over again the name 'Agastiyar.' Suddenly the eminent Siddhar stepped out of the nearby forest and came up to where Babaji was sitting in prayer.

Agastiyar emphasized the strict conditions under which it was to be practiced and its potential for awakening the higher levels of consciousness, spiritual enlightenment and ultimately the transformation of all five bodies. He then directed Babaji to go to Badrinath. Babaji made the long pilgrimage to Badrinath and then spent eighteen 'long, lonely months' practicing intensively all the yogic Kriya taught to him by his gurus Agastiyar and Bhoganathar.

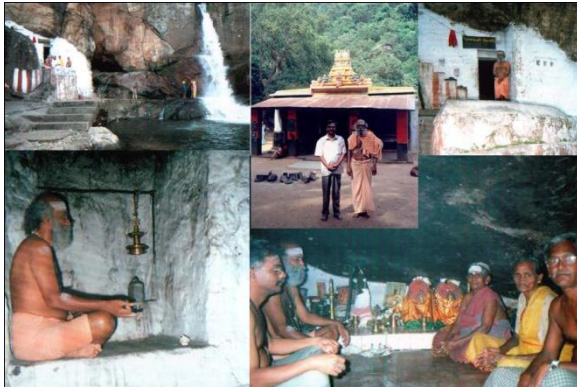


Photo 28 The 5th leg of the pilgrimage. Clockwise: Outside Agathiyar's Cave at Courtallam; At Shenbaga Devi Amman's temple; Outside Agathiyar's Cave; Inside Agathiyar's Cave; Tavayogi at the inner chamber of Agathiyar's Cave.

The caretaker of the Shenbaga Devi Amman temple showed us the way to Agathiyar's Cave, opened up the grilled gates, cleared some space and boiled some hot tea for us. The caretaker took leave of us. We could hardly stand up in this cave. It was small, cosy, and warm in here. The adjacent compartment of the cave, which was empty except for an oil lamp that was kept burning, was where Agathiyar had meditated. We entered this chamber and sat down. As usual, Tavayogi sang the hymns, which I had now become familiar with. I chanted the names of the Sidhas. We spent the night in this cave.

The next day, Tavayogi suggested we go to Dhakshinamurthi's Cave and Ramalinga Adigal's Cave. The caretaker made tea for us. When we came down to Shenbaga Devi Amman's temple, a sadhu who had tea earlier with us at Agathiyar's cave, volunteered to take us to Dhakshinamurthi's Cave. He opened up the metal grill gates to the cave entrance, lighted an oil lamp inside the cave and waited for us outside the cave. We entered the cave, which was large enough for us to stand. We sat down in meditation for a while.

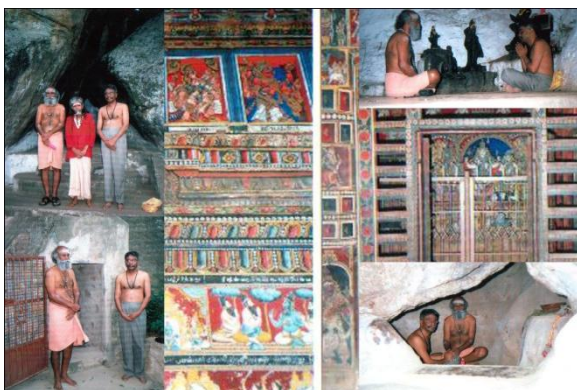


Photo 29 The final leg of my pilgrimage with Tavayogi. Clockwise: With a sadhu outside Dhakshinamurthi's Cave in Courtallam; Paintings at Chitrasabai in Courtallam; Inside Dhakshinamurthi's Cave; Chitrasabai; Inside the inner chamber of Vallalar's Cave; Chitrasabai; Outside Vallalar's Cave

The sadhu closed the grilled gates behind us as we left for Ramalinga Adigal's Cave. The sadhu went his way. He did not guide us to the cave nor follow us. Tavayogi led us to the cave. The entrance to the cave was secured with metal grill gate too. Tavayogi told me it was locked. I

inspected the grill gate and tried to unlatch it. The latch gave way. It was pitch dark inside. We lighted a candle that we had brought along. The outer chamber was large enough to stand around but we had to crawl into the inner chamber, which was rather small. I grasped Tavayogi's hand as tears ran down my cheeks. I was grateful and appreciated Tavayogi for having brought me to these spectacular and auspicious places. I would not have made it here on my own.

We closed the grill gate to the cave and headed back for Agathiyar's cave. We packed up and prayed at the Shenbaga Devi Amman temple before coming down the hills.

We stopped over at the Kutralanathar temple in town. Tavayogi brought me to the back of the temple where we sat before Agathiyar's shrine. Tavayogi broke down in tears as he sang the hymns. I thought I saw Agathiyar blink his eyes. I got up to inspect and assure myself that I wasn't seeing things. I stood still, my gaze fixed on Agathiyar. He was blinking his eyes. Tavayogi broke my attention span when he called out, "You have seen, have you? Come on let's move on." Tavayogi again as at Agasthiyampalli hurried me out of the temple after witnessing another spectacular event. He never gave me a moment to dwell on the mystical. I presume he does not want me to be stuck with those images and stay put at that stage or level forever. Adi Sankara was always afraid that the devotee or the yogi might become so infatuated with his God that he would never get to the Reality behind the Gods.

We moved on to Palani. Tavayogi sat at Bhoganathar Samadhi in meditation. I wept in silent. As we came out of Bhogar's chamber, a young priest intercepted us at the corridor and passed a tumbler of milk to Tavayogi saying Abhisega Paal. I was overjoyed. I told myself, "My God it was happening again. I am being given the Abhisega Paal again." I was given a tumbler of milk on my visit here in 2003 under the same circumstances. I was receiving it again. Tavayogi drank a portion and passed it on. As we walked away from Bhogar's shrine, Tavayogi turned around and with a large grin and a twinkle in his eyes, questioned me, "What is it, my son." I went up to him and placed my head on his chests. Tears of joy quelled in my eyes. I was experiencing bliss.

On the way back to Kallar, Tavayogi took me to the Marudamalai Murugan temple where we went down a flight of steps to the cave of Pampatti Sidha. Tavayogi meditated. Some of the devotees and tourists come over to Tavayogi for the sacred ash. This was the first time I saw public approach Tavayogi for the sacred ash.

Epilogue

Agathiyar mentioned in the nadi that I went looking for Supramania Swami; that he sent Tavayogi to me; and that I went on my own discretion to meet Rengaraja without their blessings. I then realized that it is very important for us to receive Grace or Arul. We need to put in the necessary effort and pray that the Lord showers his grace on us. Then it turns out to be a successful venture.

Richard S. Weiss in 'RECIPES FOR IMMORTALITY, MEDICINE, RELIGION AND COMMUNITY IN SOUTH INDIA', published by Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009 says it beautifully,

Human effort is successful only with divine assistance.

Supramania Swami told me that we shall 'polish' IT till we attain God. He added that no effort is lost. Tavayogi told me that we shall put in all the effort to attain God. He added that if we do not achieve God in this birth then it shall be in the next.

Swami Sivananda has this advice for us,

Let each man take the path according to his capacity, temperament, and understanding. His Satguru will meet him along the path. Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one Master. Then you will have rapid spiritual progress. Once you choose your Guru, implicitly follow him. God will guide you through the Guru.

Just as Swami Muktananda said he had to wait a long time before he received the 'word' from his guru Bhagawan Nithyananda, Tavayogi too told me I had to wait twelve years to receive his grace. His able aid, comrade of many years and disciple Mataji Sarojini Ammaiyar patiently waits for the day too.

Swami Rajarshi Muni in 'YOGA - THE ULTIMATE ATTAINMENT', Jaico Publishing House, 2004 too mentions that it takes a long time to reach the final goal and that there is no shortcut to liberation.

Muktananda mentions in 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING? - A GUIDE TO THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY', SYDA Foundation, 1989,

A guru has a bundle that he has been passed through the lineage and usually when he is about to leave his body he gives it to his disciple.

When Supramania Swami passed on the merits gained from his Tavam to me, I realize the responsibility of carrying the good name of the guru lies on my shoulder.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's translation of Tirumular 'TIRUMANTIRAM - Verse 573', from 'MERGING WITH SIVA – HINDUISM CONTEMPORARY METAPHYSICS'), sums up my journey with Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal.

He taught me humility, infused in me the light of devotion, granted me the grace of His feet. After holy interrogation, testing me entirely, He revealed to me the Real, the unreal and real-unreal. Undoubtedly, the Siva-Guru is Iraivan, the worshipful Lord Himself.

Tavayogi *taught me humility* when he picked up my sandals from the opposite banks of the river that flows by his ashram; carried my dirty linen at Pothigai; and carried the sack of vegetables on his shoulders back from the market. I realized here was a man whose ego had died. He was showing me by example how a saint should live. What he did was give me practical guidance.

I was taken back in time to places where modern means of transport could not reach; where there were no facilities such as in the modern world; where I went back in time to live in Tavayogi's hamlet where there was no water supply and electricity. Tavayogi was living in the dark moving with the aid of hurricane lights, torchlight, and the moonlight. One had to ease in the bushes although he had a latrine built for the comfort of foreign devotees.

Tavayogi *infused in me the light of devotion* when he gave me Diksha on Agathiyar's Moola Mantra which was to be chanted; showed me Asana and Pranayama which was to be adopted and put to practised; delivered more mantras to chant; and showed me the proper way to conduct a Homam and Abhisegam.

Tavayogi did not preach much but instead got me on the path of the Sidhas. I was taken to the jungles of Kangayam, Pothigai, and Courtallam. I had the rare opportunity to visit these spots and stay overnight in some of these caves, which I would not have done if I were touring on my own.

Tavayogi taught me by exemplary behaviour of his. What he gave me was practical guidance; demonstration of the Yoga Asanas and Pranayama that he does daily; bringing me on his daily morning walks to keep fit and be with nature; showing me how to conduct prayers, Homam, and Abhisegam; and teaching me to drop the ego. Agathiyar reminds me in the nadi that the Asanas and Pranayama demonstrated by Tavayogi are to be treasured and practiced diligently.

Leonard Orr in 'THE YOGA OF EVERLASTING LIFE' observes the common denominators of the practices of all the immortals he had met (eight of them),

Notice the main points are not intellectually stimulating. They are practices. They are not something you can learn. They are something which you do. They are like the water which runs forever, the fire which is always consuming. The wind which always moves. The Earth, always changing and nourishing. The immortal yogis who do these simple practices are always awake and alive. The basic practices described here naturally evolve the soul to this high state of body mastery.

After witnessing a spectacular event each time, Tavayogi hurried me away from that place. He never gave me a moment to dwell on the mystical. He always reminded me not to get stuck at any one stage or level. For one who was in the Sariyai stage, he has to move up to the Kriyai stage. Similarly for one on the Yoga stage he too has to advance to the Gnana stage. There is nothing wrong in these stages. It is only wrong to forever remain in one particular stage of advancement. Adi Sankara was always afraid that the devotee or the yogi might become so infatuated with his God that he would never get to the Reality behind the Gods. Tirumular reminds us that we would have to even loose that identity with Shiva.



Photo 30 Tavayogi demonstrating Asanas and Pranayama to students in Malaysia. Still photos retrieved from video by Muralitharan Saminathan, Sathiswaran Arumugam and Thayalan Arumugam, Malaysia

Tavayogi granted me the grace of his feet. He never allowed nor approved disciples and devotees falling at his feet for blessings. He always reminded us that we should only fall at the feet of Agathiyar and no one else.

After holy interrogation, testing me entirely. Tavayogi told me that the devotee would be tested just as he had been tested to the extreme. Although Tavayogi's life began in poverty, he managed to secure a Masters. He started a cotton mill. With the wealth gained from his booming business, he ventured into politics and financed films. He was a prominent speaker and chairperson at Pattimandrams. He became a disciple of Chitramuthu Adigal. He referred to the nadi of the Sidhas which revealed his mission. He followed the teachings of the Sidhas that brought transformation in him. When the nation went through troubled times, he incurred massive losses. This is when he lost his eyesight too. He had to sell all his assets to settle his debts. His children were left in the custody of a relative; his wife worked as a servant; while he moved into a temple hoping to be cured by the Goddess. At one juncture during his stay at this temple Tavayogi wanted to end his life in front of a moving train only to stop in his tracks and surrender to Agathiyar.

Ramana Maharshi explains surrender in 'DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN' by A. Devaraja Mudaliar,

'By whatever path you go, you will have to lose yourself in the One. Surrender is complete only when you reach the stage, 'Thou art all' and 'Thy will, will be done'.

You can have no likes or dislikes after your surrender and that your Will should become completely non-existent, the Lord's Will taking its place. Such death of the ego is nothing different from Jnana. So by whatever path you may go, you must come to Jnana or oneness's."

Shantideva, the eight century Indian saint wrote,

In order to attain the highest illumination we all have to pass through a spiritual birth. Man as a creature, brought into being out of nothing, certainly is at the mercy of his creator. Man as a spirit, by becoming spiritually conscious he can control his destiny. The self is not known through the study of the scriptures, or through the subtlest intellect, or through much learning; but he who longs for him knows him. He makes us dead to our own existence and alive to his own. God appears when the ego dies.

After his surrender, Tavayogi's life changed for the better. He regained his eyesight and all the comforts of life. Tavayogi started rebuilding his life back. He started his cotton mill industry, held prayers, fed the poor and did charity.

At fifty years of age, and after 25 years of faithfully following the teachings of his guru Chitramuthu Adigal, Agathiyar and the Sidhas, Tavayogi made the decision to become a mendicant, this time leaving behind his family and wealth voluntarily. He left home to roam the streets of India; meditated in caves in the deep forests; slept at temples and begged for his food.

He revealed to me the Real, the unreal and real-unreal. I have to be patient say Tavayogi and Agathiyar. Tavayogi mentioned I was hasty in my journey to know God. He told me one has to wait twelve years to receive the grace of the guru. Tavayogi served his guru Chitramuthu Adigal twenty five years before he received the grace of his guru; Tavayogi had put in many years on the sidha path before the sidhas started appearing before him.

Lucy Cornelssen in 'HUNTING THE 'T', Sri Ramanasramam, 2005, says,

The sastras say that one must serve a guru for twelve years for getting self realization.

Undoubtedly, the Siva-Guru is Iraivan, the worshipful Lord Himself. Indeed, the guru is God in the eyes of the disciple.

Swami Muktananda in 'KUNDALINI - THE SECRET OF LIFE', Siddha Yoga Publication, 1994,

The guru is the grace bestowing power of God.

Muktananda in 'THE GURU MAKES YOU PERFECT - MEDITATIONS ON THE GURU'S GRACE' from 'DARSHAN', a Siddha Yoga Publication, May 1992,

The guru is one in whom the divine power of grace has taken permanent abode. The truth is that when God is pleased, he will direct you to the guru, and when the guru is pleased, he will direct you to God. It is only when the two come together that you have the divine union.

Gurudev is like the philosopher's stone; he makes his disciples just like himself. He turns them into gurus like himself. This is the true guru-disciple relationship.'

Richard S. Weiss in 'RECIPES FOR IMMORTALITY, MEDICINE, RELIGION AND COMMUNITY IN SOUTH INDIA', published by Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009 quotes from Tirumular's 'TIRUMANTIRAM',

I received the title of 'master' by Nandi's grace. I found Mulan only through Nandi's grace. Without Nandi's grace, what can be accomplished? With Nandi showing the way, I remained on the earth.











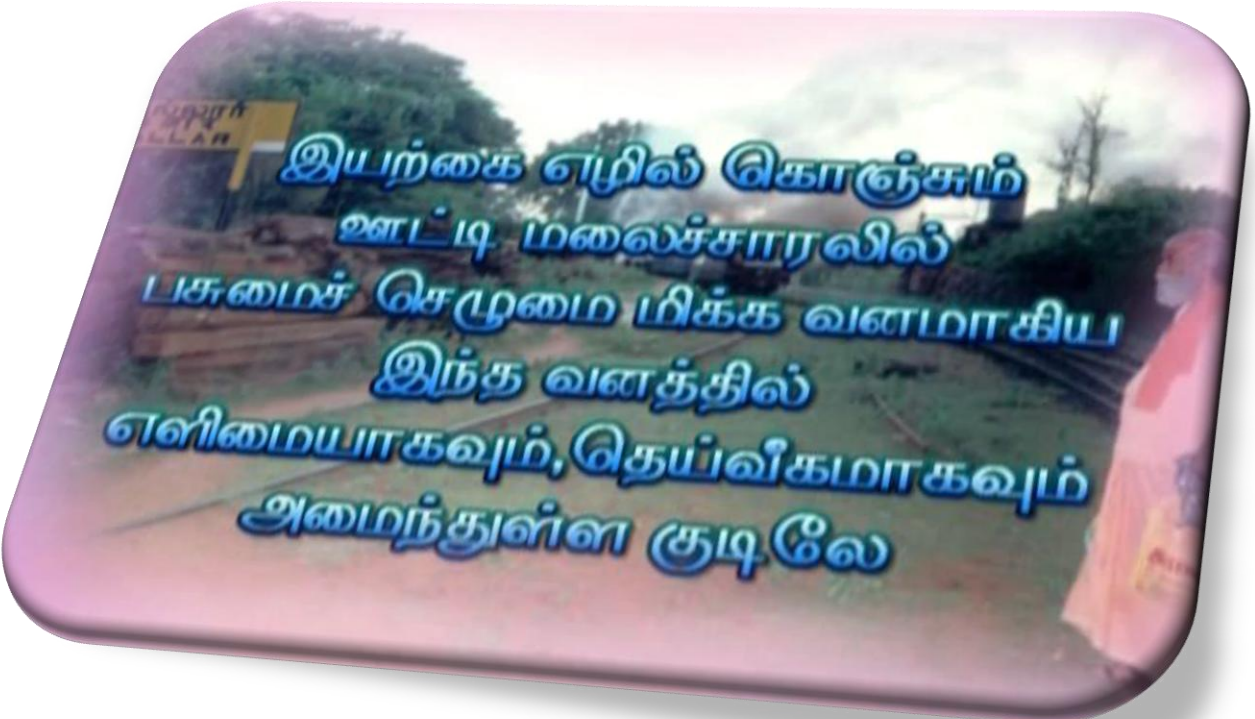












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அமைந்துள்ள குடிலே



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